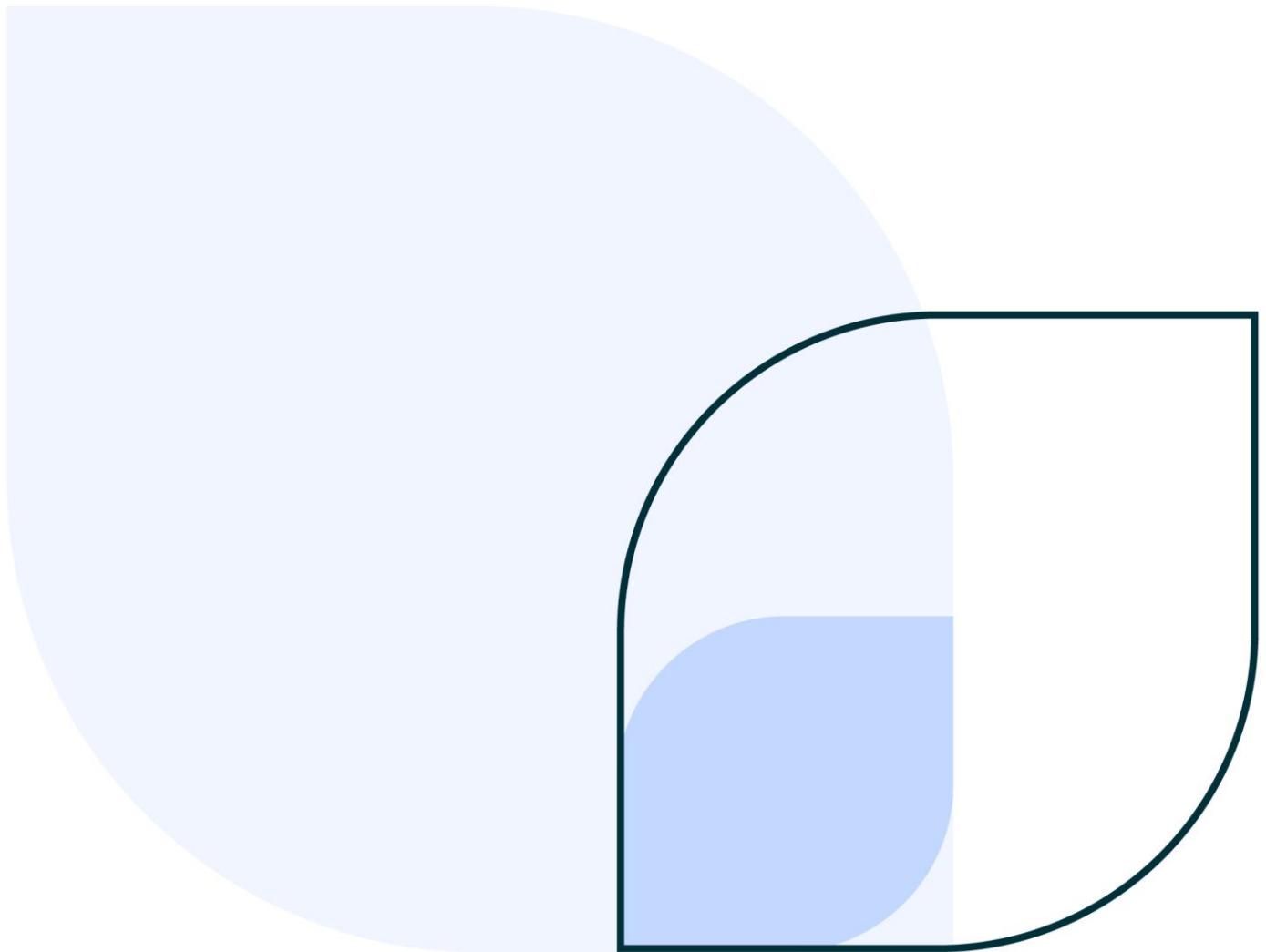


# Religious Education

Statement of Entitlement  
for Church of England Schools  
January 2026  
(for implementation by September 2026)





# Religious Education: enabling every child to flourish

## 1. Our vision for education

The essential place of religious education (RE) in a Church school flows from our deep commitment to the flourishing of every child articulated in our *Vision for Education*.<sup>1</sup> This document sets out the aim for young people to leave school with a rich and well-informed understanding of Christianity. Equally important is the development of a commitment to generous hospitality, expressed through deep respect for the integrity of other religious and belief traditions, and for the religious freedom of every individual.

## 2. Status of this document

This *Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education* sets out the minimum expectations that pupils in a Church school should expect to receive in their RE learning. It is intended as a foundation on which to build secure RE practice.

The *Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education* is a key document for all Church schools. Accountability is ensured through the SIAMS inspection process, which takes this document as its point of reference for expectations in RE (IQ6 and IQ7).<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Aims and objectives of RE in Church Schools

In a Church school, RE should enable pupils to:

- Engage meaningfully and critically with learning which helps them to make sense of the multi-religious and multi-secular world in which they live.
- Know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of beliefs and practices, using approaches which engage with biblical text and key sources of authority.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, appreciating the complexity, diversity, continuity and change that exists within those worldviews being studied.
- Grapple with questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- Understand the concept of religion and recognise its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals, communities and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- Develop disciplinary knowledge which equips pupils to be religiously literate.
- Explore their personal worldviews; their own religious or non-religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good (2016) | The Church of England

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections>



## 4. The National and Local Context for RE in a Church School

### 4.1 Curriculum approach

Across the country, different curriculum models and locally agreed syllabuses take varied approaches to RE. Depending on a school's designation, this will influence to a greater or lesser extent the curriculum freedoms a Church school may experience. This statement of entitlement recognises the mixed ecology within which Church schools operate. It also acknowledges the ongoing review of the place of RE within the school curriculum, in light of recommendations of the government's Curriculum and Assessment Review (2025).<sup>3</sup> The National Society for Education (NSE) recognises and welcomes innovative approaches to RE teaching which secure excellent outcomes for pupils. It also acknowledges the variety in resourcing available to Church schools due to their geography.

All Church schools should ensure that curriculum resources are carefully adapted to their local context in a way that ensures this statement of entitlement is fully met. This includes both voluntary aided (or formerly voluntary aided) schools and voluntary controlled (or formerly voluntary controlled) schools. Those responsible for RE in every Church school will need to check adherence to the statutory expectations for RE and seek out support as needed.

### 4.2 The National Content Standard

The NSE has endorsed the non-statutory National Content Standard for RE (NCS).<sup>4</sup> Church school, trust and diocesan leaders should be aware of the NCS and ensure that they strive to achieve the standard for breadth, depth and ambition of RE curriculum content in their schools. This is particularly important when new curriculum models and content are being developed.

This statement of entitlement intentionally aligns with the NCS so that in adhering to this document, Church schools can be confident they are meeting the minimum expectations of the NCS. Should the NCS be reviewed, this statement of entitlement will be similarly reviewed to reflect any relevant changes (but no earlier than July 2028, see section 5 below).

## 5. Accountability and inspection

The effectiveness of the RE curriculum in all Church schools is evaluated during the SIAMS inspection process (IQ6).<sup>5</sup> Ofsted may also inspect the RE curriculum in Church schools, however they are not permitted to inspect the teaching and learning of RE in voluntary aided (or formerly voluntary aided) schools. This is specific to SIAMS under IQ7.

Church schools will be inspected by SIAMS with reference to this statement of entitlement from September 2026.

These expectations will remain in place until at least July 2028; the NSE will review the statement of entitlement and make updates after that date if required by any changes to the status of RE implemented by government.

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<sup>3</sup> Curriculum and Assessment Review Final Report - GOV.UK

<sup>4</sup> National Content Standard for RE in England – 1st Edition – 2023 – REC

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections>



## 6. Expectations for Church school stakeholders

We have framed this statement of entitlement as a set of broad expectations, organised by stakeholder group. While there are naturally areas of overlap in what different stakeholders can expect, these expectations are not intended as a checklist, but as a framework through which stakeholders can understand both their responsibilities for, and what they can expect from, RE in Church schools. Each section should be read with the understanding that the responsibilities and aspirations it outlines may also be relevant to other stakeholder groups.

### 6.1 All pupils can expect

- RE to be a high-profile subject and a priority for those who lead their school.
- To be enabled to achieve highly in RE, irrespective of educational need or disadvantage.
- A sequenced curriculum where they will learn about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews and the diversity that exists within those worldviews.
- A balanced curriculum, using high-quality resources, where they engage with a range of ways of knowing, including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.
- Teachers who have secure RE subject knowledge and are able to deliver content accurately whilst having the ability to challenge common misconceptions.
- RE to be delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner.
- RE classrooms which are safe, supportive spaces where pupils can openly explore their own religious, spiritual, and/or philosophical ways of living, believing, thinking, and belonging.
- To be given the opportunity to articulate their personal worldviews and engage in meaningful, respectful dialogue with others.
- RE teaching which promotes religious and cultural understanding within communities and society.

### 6.2 Parents can expect

- RE to be an expression of the school's theologically rooted Christian vision and a priority for those who lead their child's school.
- RE to be a high-profile academic subject, distinct from collective worship and non-confessional in nature.
- RE provision to reflect the Anglican foundation on which the school is established (i.e. according to its trust deed or academy funding agreement).
- Christianity to be the main religious worldview studied in and through RE in each year group/phase equating to at least 50% of curriculum time.
- A range of religious and non-religious worldviews to be studied.
- An RE curriculum to be offered for all pupils in all statutory year groups (Reception to Year 13).

### 6.3 Teachers of RE can expect

Positive support in providing effective RE from:

- A named, trained member of staff who leads RE knowledgeably
- The school's senior leadership team
- Those responsible for governance
- Their multi-academy trust (where applicable)
- Their diocesan board of education and its officers
- The NSE
- Their local community, including church communities
- To receive training, ongoing feedback and upskilling in delivering RE.
- To be encouraged and enabled to belong to educational communities and networks which provide continuous professional development.



### 6.3.1 As a result, teaching and learning will

- Critically engage with a range of religious and non-religious source materials, including biblical texts.
- Utilise different disciplinary lenses, including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.
- Provide opportunities to understand the roles of texts, beliefs, rituals and practices and how they help form identity in a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Pupils should explore how beliefs, rituals and practices may change in different times, places, communities and cultures.
- Develop confident religious literacy, including the explicit teaching and development of disciplinary knowledge.
- Generate meaningful and informed dialogue around a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Recognise that students bring personal knowledge to the RE classroom and enable them to navigate and develop this.
- Practise a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.
- Provide for the needs of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Be based upon accurate and inclusive assessment of the different forms of knowledge, which enables pupils to make progress in their learning.

### 6.4 Senior leaders in schools and leaders of RE will ensure that

- RE's high priority within the curriculum and status as an academic subject are clearly articulated.
- The RE entitlement is entirely separate from collective worship.
- RE provision reflects the school's trust deed or academy funding agreement.
- The RE curriculum is well-balanced, well-sequenced and reflects the school's specific context.
- Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, is committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages (KS) 1-4.
- All teaching staff and those responsible for governance understand the distinctive role and purpose of RE within a Church school.
- An effective system is in place for those responsible for governance to monitor and evaluate standards in RE.
- Priority is given to building up staff expertise through professional development and resourcing, particularly where teachers with specialisms in other areas are delivering RE.
- They engage with their diocese when developing the school's RE curriculum and adapting schemes and frameworks, such as a locally agreed syllabus, to the school's context.
- All pupils follow a course which leads to a recognised and appropriate qualification in RE or Religious Studies at KS4. This includes pupils who have SEND. The study of Christianity will be a significant part of any Religious Studies qualification offered.
- Every opportunity is given for students to exceed exam board requirements, recognising that an exam board specification is not a curriculum.
- Students who achieve suitable grades at GCSE RS have the option to follow appropriate A-level courses.
- A high-quality and clearly identifiable curriculum for RE is in place for all students at KS5 in addition to A-level provision. This should continue to develop students' understanding of Christianity and other religious and non-religious worldviews.

### 6.5 Multi academy trusts with Church schools will ensure that

- RE has a high priority as an academic subject.
- Appropriate systems are in place to monitor and evaluate standards in RE effectively in all Church schools within their trust.
- Senior leaders in Church schools are supported and enabled to prioritise RE in accordance with this statement of entitlement.



- The RE curriculum in place meets the expectations set out in the school's funding agreement.<sup>6</sup>
- Subject knowledge and subject leadership are developed, to enable high-quality teaching and learning in RE.
- They look towards the expertise provided by their diocese for support and guidance with RE.

#### 6.6 Diocesan boards of education and their officers will

- Assist in the promotion of RE in Church schools of all designations in the diocese.
- Enable different designations of school to understand their responsibilities for RE and develop a curriculum appropriate to the type of school and context.
- Secure and/or signpost high-quality training for schools throughout the diocese.
- Provide support to multi-academy trusts and school senior leadership teams in curriculum development.
- Support the adaptation of resources to meet the statutory expectations of locally agreed syllabuses (where applicable) in a Church school context.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of RE in Church schools including through taking note of SIAMS inspection reports, the annual report of the Director of SIAMS and Ofsted reports.
- Support schools to understand how the expectations of the SIAMS framework can drive continuous improvement in RE.

#### 6.7 The National Society for Education will

- Promote and advocate for the place of RE as an academic subject in all schools.
- Celebrate the prominence of RE in Church schools and the benefit this brings to school communities.
- Respond to the needs of the dioceses in supporting and resourcing RE, especially in areas of national and international significance.
- Nurture broader partnerships and relationships that support the development of RE.
- Support, highlight and share innovation within RE in partnership with the dioceses.
- Listen to and engage with the voices of stakeholders to ensure RE remains responsive, relevant, and valued.

### Appendix 1: Definitions

**Denominational RE** This is the Religious Education taught in voluntary aided (and former voluntary aided) schools where the governing body has the legal authority to determine the content of the curriculum. Parents of pupils in voluntary controlled (and former voluntary controlled) schools have the legal right to request denominational RE and these schools must ensure they have identified reserved teachers to fulfil this request if it is granted.

**Locally Agreed Syllabus** For voluntary controlled schools, there is currently a statutory requirement to follow the RE syllabus adopted by the locally agreed syllabus conference of the LA, led by the LA's Standing Advisory Committee for RE (SACRE). Academies which were formerly voluntary controlled are required to provide an RE curriculum that is in accordance with their academy funding agreement, which will usually stipulate that provision for RE must be in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996.

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<sup>6</sup> See Department for Education [Mainstream academy and free school: supplemental funding agreement \(2020\)](#), page 16-17 'Provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996.'