

Recommendations from the Diocesan Board of Education: RE in Church of England schools

This is a statement from the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) which promotes Religious Education (RE) in this diocese. The DBE is making the following recommendations to church schools and their governing bodies.

All Church of England schools should be committed to excellence in RE, offering real educational challenge in their provision, and striving for outstanding standards in both RE teaching and learning. The DBE recommends that all church schools make use of the diocesan education team to achieve the best possible standards and enjoyment for their pupils in this core subject in a church school. Contact the [Education Team](#) for further information and support.

The DBE strongly recommends:

- **That all Church schools in this diocese ensure that 50% of their RE curriculum time focuses on Christianity.**
- **The use of the [Suffolk Agreed Syllabus 2023](#), modified with reference to the [RE Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools \(2019\)](#) (produced by the Church of England Education Office) for all church schools in the Diocese.**

The DBE also recommends that:

- The [Suffolk Agreed Syllabus](#) should be used for RE curriculum planning. The Headteacher and governing body should ensure appropriate provision of time and resources for the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus 2023 and ensure planning and assessment are properly addressed.
- RE teaching should be enriched for all religions and worldviews in all schools e.g. through organised visits, where possible, to places of worship, celebration days with an RE focus and hosting visitors in school to speak about their faith.
- Pupils should learn to value RE learning and receive positive messages about the value of the subject.
- Staff, including ECTs, HLTAs and TAs should receive positive support and training to enable them to teach RE well. RE Subject Leaders should be encouraged to develop their professional knowledge by attending training, diocesan courses and RE networks.
- Serious consideration should be given to achieving either the [Suffolk Widening Inclusivity in RE \(WIRE\) award](#) or the [RE Quality Mark \(REQM\) award](#).
- Regular contact should be maintained with the [Diocesan Schools' Adviser](#), local churches and the [Cathedral](#).

Additional Guidance by school type

CEVA schools:

- RE should by law be taught in accordance with the trust deed, or the beliefs or denomination specified in the designation of the school, to reflect the religious character of the school.
- Governors are responsible for deciding what is taught but may accept a recommendation from their DBE e.g. to adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

VA academies and sponsored VC academies:

- Church of England academies must provide RE in accordance with their Funding Agreement.
- The Funding Agreement for former VA schools and sponsored VC academies requires provision for RE in accordance with the tenets of the Church of England. Academies can also provide RE that is in line with a Locally Agreed Syllabus and teach about other faiths if they choose to do so.
- This requirement can be delivered through a denominational syllabus but this diocese does not have one.

CEVC schools:

- CEVC schools must follow the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2023.
- RE subject leaders should be familiar with the [RE Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools \(2019\)](#)

VC converter academies:

- Church of England academies must provide RE in accordance with their Funding Agreement.
- The Funding Agreement for VC converter academies requires RE to be provided in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses. This means the RE curriculum must reflect that 'the religious traditions in Great Britain are Christian, whilst taking into account the practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' (s.375(3) of the Education Act 1996).
- These academies may choose to use an agreed syllabus in full or part to meet their requirements to provide RE. They may also choose to develop their own syllabus that meets the requirements in their funding agreement.

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

SIAMS assesses the way RE contributes to the outworking of a church school's Christian vision. It highlights the responsibility of Church school leaders to ensure that pupils flourish academically through the provision of high-quality RE.



The DBE recommends that Governors and RE Subject Leaders in all church schools consult the SIAMS framework closely and use this as the basis of a regular and rigorous evaluation of their provision and standards in RE.

The following Inspection Questions (IQs) from the [SIAMS framework](#) focus on RE:

IQ6 - Is the RE curriculum effective (with reference to the expectations set out in the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement)?

IQ7 - What is the quality of RE?

Important to note about IQ7: IQ7 forms part of the inspection of VA maintained schools and academies that were formerly VA schools. VC schools, and the vast majority of academies that were formerly VC schools, will not be assessed against IQ7. Please contact the education team for further information or if you are unsure if you will be assessed against IQ7.

Approved by the Diocesan Board of Education 12 February 2025