

Where curiosity hatches, creativity takes flight and learning soars to a sky of opportunity.

Thomas Hickman School



Religious Education Policy

Approved by:	Pippa Brand-Benee	Date: January 2026
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Signed:

Date:

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Alan Sherwell – Chair of Governors

“My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.” Dalai Lama

Introduction:

At Thomas Hickman School, we strive to create a learning environment which promotes diversity, self-awareness, respect and tolerance of one another. Religious Education (R.E.) is taught in accordance to Buckinghamshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. This draws on the rich history of the major religious traditions in Great Britain, with prominence to Christianity to reflect that the religious tradition in Britain is mainly Christian. We also ensure that we explore the other main religions which are followed in Britain; Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism.

We recognise and value the religious backgrounds and non-religious backgrounds of each of our pupils, within our community. Taking into consideration that Thomas Hickman proudly sits as part of a richly diverse community, we intend to be sensitive to the home background of all and therefore work to ensure RE is accessible to all pupils and teachers of any faith or none.

Purpose of Policy

RE is a foundation subject required by the National Curriculum and planned for by the Local Authority. This policy will outline the purpose, nature and management of how RE is taught and learned in our school and will inform new teachers of expectations.

Intent

At Thomas Hickman School we want to inspire all children to become curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. We want children to be intrigued and extend their knowledge of Christianity, Hinduism and Islam through exploring the religions. At Thomas Hickman, we want all children to consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion and to make connections between different aspects of religions and religious expression. We aim to challenge all pupils to recognise the importance of mutual understanding and tolerance, whilst learning about the similarities and differences within - as well as between - religions. We aim to distinguish between ideas of right and wrong and value what is good and true. We hope to provide all children with the skills needed to succeed in expressing their own ideas in response to the material they engage with; identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views, using subject specific vocabulary.

Implementation

Religious Education will be taught through RE every other half term in Autumn 2, Spring 2 and Summer 2. The lessons follow the Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. There will also be assemblies and visits from our local faith communities to develop the children's understanding. Links with our healthy minds sessions allow them to reflect on their own sense of who they are and their uniqueness as a person, what they believe, what they think is important and how these influence their day-to-day lives.

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Pupils will be taught to:

- ✓ Describe the key aspects of religions and beliefs, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others, and reflect on what it means to belong to a faith community;
- ✓ Describe the variety of practices and ways of life that stem from beliefs and show understanding of the challenges involved in committing to a faith or belief in the modern world;
- ✓ Identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences within and between religions, discussing different views of religious truth and belief;
- ✓ Investigate the significance of religion and belief in the local, national and global communities and what inspires us to live better lives;
- ✓ Consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, understand why they are important in religion and reflect on the significance of experiences that are difficult to put into words;
- ✓ Describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions, reflecting on ideas of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to them;
- ✓ Use specialist vocabulary in communicating their knowledge and understanding;
- ✓ Use and interpret information about religions and beliefs from a range of sources, considering the positive and negative influence they can have on individuals and communities.

Impact

Pupils will be able to understand the world they live in by developing their religious literacy. They will have the skills in recognising, handling and analysing the big questions and concepts that arise from experience and help make sense of life. Children will be able to reflect on their own and others experiences through the use of debating, reasoning, self-expression, relationships and self-understanding. Pupils will leave Thomas Hickman School with creativity, personal develop and critical thinking through the understanding of identity and their search for meaning, purpose and value. Pupils will also have developed a sense of community and belonging though building positive relationships for learning and behaviour. Children will be able to understand and respectfully challenge and be challenged by people of different lifestyles, beliefs and practices.

Our aims:

RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. RE lessons offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection. Teaching in RE engages pupils in discussion, dialogue and debate which enables them to make their reasoning clear and which supports their cognitive and linguistic development.

RE makes a key contribution supporting schools to promote 'British values' and to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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- The government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy – values of:
 - tolerance
 - mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs
 - democracy
 - the rule of law
 - individual liberty

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals;
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews;
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

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Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

R.E. aims to enhance children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:

- Developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to them.
- Raise questions of identity, meaning, purpose and value and encourages people to reflect on experience, life-styles and opinions.



We are all...



B.I.R.D.S

at Thomas Hickman and at all times we are **expected** to behave and learn in a way in keeping with our learning philosophy. We are all BIRDS, staff, community and children alike



We will be **BRAVE** in life and learning and stand up for what is right, even when no-one is looking. Everyone has the right to learn, be safe and respected at THS.



Our courage to do the right thing will **INSPIRE** others around us to follow; we will be strong and lead the way.

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We will be **RESPECTFUL** to our THS school family. We will demonstrate this in class, at playtime and around the school. Our kind hands, kind words and kind heart will show people we all belong together and no BIRD flies alone: there are No Outsiders at THS.



Even when times are really hard, we will stay **DETERMINED** to follow our school expectations.



We 'grow our brain' every minute, of every day: we are **SCHOLARS** and understand that sometimes we need to learn how to behave well too.

Collective Worship

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act and the 1996 education Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' our collective worship reflects the basic traditions of Christian beliefs without being distinctive of any denomination. Specific content to illustrate specific aspects of Christian belief are drawn from both the Christian and secular world, and where the beliefs are common with other faiths, from those traditions also.

Definition of Collective Worship: Collective Worship is a time when the whole school, or groups within the school meet together in order to consider and reflect on common concerns, issues and interests. It offers all pupils an opportunity to be together in one space and engaging in relevant, meaningful experiences and provides opportunities for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Aims of Collective Worship

Assembly time contributes significantly to the ethos of Thomas Hickman School and it is our aim that it is a time when the school community can:

- share common aims and values
- celebrate achievement and special times
- explore together the world in which we live develop a community spirit

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- Experience a variety of styles of worship and celebrate different religious festivals e.g. inviting a visitor in to talk about the meaning behind a religious festival
- Celebrate together e.g. festivals, school values, individual achievements
- Build a sense of community/foster corporate identity
- Develop a reflective approach to living which sometimes encourages understanding of and invitation to prayer
- Look beyond the physical, material and measurable
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not
- Include the usual of visual aids such as music, art and film to create discussion and its links to SMSC

In Thomas Hickman School we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. The key stage meets together on Monday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday there is a class assembly, discussing themes from the assembly. Every Tuesday we have a singing practice led by the music subject leader.

The headteacher usually leads the whole school assembly on Monday, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Each half term, the assemblies are given a theme with clear ideas on what to discuss each week. These themes are also discussed in class and referred to by staff regularly. The assemblies include religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar as well as topical events happening nationally and throughout the world. We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the discussion and understanding of the wider world.

Monday	Whole school assembly led by Headteacher
Tuesday	Singing Assembly – based on themes
Wednesday	Year group Assembly – follows a progressive termly plan to lead discussions
Thursday	Key Stage Assembly – led by Teachers on a rota basis. Follows the half termly plan set out by Headteacher
Friday	Celebration assembly

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Song/music

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing. We are careful with our songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

Every week we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Planning

We use a Religious Education programme of learning and a range of resources to teach lessons. Following both the Bucks RE Syllabus and a scheme of learning based on key questions for the children to explore. Resources are shared and held centrally for all staff to access.

The THS RE Curriculum map weekly overview guides the planning to ensure progression and covers all the required religions to be taught in a progressive manner.

Meeting the needs of all pupils is importance and the National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for R.E. are the starting points for planning a school curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. Teachers are expected to set suitable learning challenges, response to diverse learning needs and be sensitive to the background and personal circumstance of all students.

Withdrawal

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 2014 National Curriculum. It makes contributions to the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE is not taught to propagate religion in general or a particular religion, it is not to nurture or convert; it is an academic discipline with levels of achievements.

Parents who wish to withdraw their children, because of personal choice or religious affiliation, are permitted to do so, once they have made a formal written request to the school, and this has been agreed by the head teacher and governors. Where the pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parents want the pupil to receive. These arrangements will be made by the parents. A record of withdrawals is kept by the teacher and RE lead.

Visits/ speakers

Teachers are encouraged to take their classes to places of worship for the religions that they cover and to invite speakers into their classes. We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. This may fit in with the theme or a religious festival.

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To represent the diverse community in which our school is based, Thomas Hickman builds community cohesion with a variety of events throughout the year, linking to religious events: these are an example, but this is not an exhaustive list;

Harvest Festival – Assembly attended by parents and food donations to the church food bank appeal.

Black History Month – dancing or music events as well as external visitors

Remembrance – whole school led reflection time

Diwali – workshop of dance and Diwali café for adults to join the children in the hall

Christmas – Nativity performances and Christmas Fair

Eid – Eid party attended by parents.

Ramadan club @ lunchtimes – to support children wishing to fast

Easter- Re-telling of the Christian story

Humanism visitor – UKS2 to explore what it means to have no religion.

Passover – re-telling the story in collective assembly.

In addition to these religious events, Thomas Hickman enjoys links with charity events and fund raising for things such as Children in Need and Comic Relief, giving the children an understanding in wider world issues and encouraging their personal growth and development into strong, global citizens with moral purpose.