



# **Bracken Hill School Religious Education And Collective Worship Policy**

**Author: Miss Winsor**

**Policy Type: Whole School**

This policy is reviewed biennially to ensure compliance with current regulations

# Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

Bracken Hill School

Policy Type: Whole School

Review Cycle: Biennially

Policy Lead: RE Coordinator

## 1. Intent: The Vision for Religious Education

At Bracken Hill School, Religious Education (RE) is a vital part of the curriculum and supports pupils in exploring beliefs, traditions, values and ways of living in a way that is accessible, meaningful and engaging.

Our pupils have a wide range of learning needs including autism, communication differences and complex learning profiles. As a special school, we recognise that pupils learn best through experiences, sensory engagement, communication opportunities and meaningful interactions with others.

Through Religious Education we aim to:

- develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development
- foster curiosity, awe and wonder about the world and the diversity of human beliefs
- support pupils in understanding Christianity as the principal religion in Great Britain, alongside other world religions and worldviews
- promote British Values including mutual respect and tolerance
- encourage empathy, respect and understanding of others
- provide opportunities for reflection on personal values and relationships
- support pupils to understand kindness, fairness and respect so they can become positive members of their community.

RE contributes significantly to pupils' cultural capital, enabling them to experience traditions, celebrations and beliefs they may not otherwise encounter.

Teaching about religion and belief is sensitive and inclusive, recognising that pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

## Meaningful Access to Religious Education

At Bracken Hill School we believe Religious Education should be accessible to every pupil regardless of communication or cognitive ability.

Pupils explore ideas about belonging, kindness, celebration and belief through experiences appropriate to their developmental stage. This may include:

- sensory exploration
- storytelling

Policy Dated May 2026

- shared celebrations
- discussion and reflection where appropriate.

All pupils are supported to engage with themes of respect, difference and community in meaningful ways.

The RE curriculum follows the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus (2021–2026).

A new Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus will be launched in June 2026. This will inform the development of an updated RE curriculum from September 2026.

## 2. Implementation: How RE is Delivered

RE is delivered through adapted, experiential and communication-focused teaching approaches.

Learning is based on:

- real-life experiences
- sensory engagement
- storytelling
- communication opportunities.

### 2.1 Curriculum Pathways

#### Explorers Pathway

(Pupils with complex learning needs)

In the Explorers pathway, RE is not taught as a discrete lesson. Instead, it is woven throughout the curriculum and daily experiences.

RE is delivered through:

- continuous provision
- PSHE
- English and storytelling
- Art and Design Technology
- sensory and play-based learning
- celebrations and cultural events.

Pupils explore:

- belonging and community
- kindness and friendship
- respecting differences
- special people
- celebrations and festivals
- caring for others.

Policy Dated May 2026

There is a strong focus on helping pupils understand how to be kind, respectful and part of a community.

Learning includes:

- sensory exploration of festivals
- stories about helping and kindness
- music, movement and creative activities
- exploration of artefacts and symbols.

Assessment (Explorers)

Assessment draws on:

- the Engagement Model (exploration, anticipation, persistence and initiation)
- the Autism Education Trust (AET) Progression Framework.

Staff assess:

- interaction with others
- social understanding
- engagement and curiosity
- communication attempts.

Adventurers Pathway

Pupils explore religions through:

- storytelling
- symbols and visuals
- artefacts
- role play
- discussion.

At Key Stage 4, pupils may work towards:

- AQA Unit Awards
- ASDAN units.

Pupils in the Adventurers pathway also participate in assemblies using Picture News, supporting discussion and understanding of current events, diversity, fairness and respect in an accessible and age-appropriate way.

Pioneers Pathway

Pupils engage in:

Policy Dated May 2026

- enquiry-based learning
- ethical discussions
- structured RE study.

They may complete:

- AQA
- ASDAN
- Entry Level qualifications.

Pupils in the Pioneers pathway also participate in assemblies using Picture News, supporting discussion, reflection and awareness of current issues, beliefs and worldviews.

## 2.2 Teaching Approaches

Teaching reflects the needs of neurodiverse learners.

### Multi-Sensory Learning

Pupils explore religion through:

- artefacts
- music
- food
- textures
- sensory exploration.

### Experiential Learning

Pupils experience religion through:

- festivals and celebrations
- cooking activities
- visitors from faith communities
- educational visits and trips
- drama and role play.

### Communication-Focused Learning

Pupils communicate and express understanding through:

- symbols
- AAC
- gesture and sign
- objects of reference
- discussion and questioning where appropriate.

## 2.3 Curriculum Development and Enrichment

Following the introduction of the new Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus (2026), the school will continue to develop a more accessible, sensory-based Religious Education curriculum which reflects the needs of SEND learners.

### Calendar-Based Curriculum

Learning will be mapped to real religious events, festivals and celebrations so pupils experience them at meaningful times throughout the year.

For many SEND pupils, particularly those with communication, cognition or sensory needs, real-life and first-hand experiences are essential in helping them develop understanding and retain knowledge.

By following the religious festival calendar, pupils are able to:

- experience celebrations in authentic and meaningful contexts
- revisit key concepts through repetition and routine
- make stronger connections between stories, symbols, beliefs, people and practices
- engage with sensory elements such as food, music, clothing, artefacts, light, prayer and community celebrations
- build understanding through concrete experiences rather than abstract discussion alone.

This approach supports pupils to develop a deeper understanding of religions and worldviews over time by embedding learning through lived experiences, exploration and participation.

### RE Enrichment

To further enrich Religious Education across the school, Bracken Hill will continue to develop opportunities for pupils to experience religions and worldviews in practical and engaging ways.

This includes:

- a whole-school RE Day with visitors from different faiths and communities
- sensory and drama-based experiences to support understanding and engagement
- opportunities to explore religious artefacts, clothing, music and traditions
- activities which challenge misconceptions and promote respect for different beliefs and cultures
- celebration-based learning linked to key religious festivals throughout the year.

### Community and Cultural Links

The school has developed a local visits directory to support staff in accessing places of worship and community links within the local area.

Policy Dated May 2026

This directory supports:

- visits to places of worship
- community experiences
- cultural visits
- enrichment opportunities linked to the RE curriculum.

These experiences help pupils develop cultural awareness, community understanding and respect for diversity through meaningful first-hand experiences.

### 3. Impact

Religious Education supports pupils' personal development, communication, social understanding and awareness of the world around them.

Through meaningful, sensory and experience-based learning, pupils develop:

- empathy and kindness
- respect for others
- tolerance and understanding of differences
- awareness of religions, beliefs and cultures
- understanding of belonging and community
- confidence in participating in shared experiences and celebrations
- curiosity about the world and other people's traditions and beliefs.

Pupils learn that people may live, worship and celebrate in different ways, and that these differences should be respected.

The impact of RE can be seen through pupils':

- engagement and participation
- communication and interaction with others
- responses to stories, celebrations and sensory experiences
- ability to recognise and explore similarities and differences
- growing confidence in community and cultural experiences.

RE helps pupils become positive, respectful and inclusive members of society by promoting understanding, acceptance and shared community values.

### 4. Assessment in RE

Assessment is ongoing and personalised.

Progress is recorded using:

- SOLAR (WSP Steps – SMSC)
- Autism Education Trust (AET) Progression Framework.

At KS4, pupils may also:

- give written responses to Nottinghamshire 'Big Questions'.

### Recognising Progress

Progress may be shown through:

- engagement
- interaction
- communication (AAC, symbols)
- participation in celebrations
- responses to sensory experiences.

### Assessment Methods

Staff use:

- observation
- interaction
- discussion

to assess understanding of:

- empathy
- belonging
- respect
- differences.

## 5. British Values

Religious Education promotes the fundamental British Values of:

- mutual respect
- tolerance
- fairness
- understanding diversity
- individual liberty
- the rule of law.

At Bracken Hill School, these values are taught through meaningful everyday experiences and interactions across the curriculum.

Pupils develop understanding of British Values through:

- learning to share, take turns and work alongside others
- celebrating different religions, cultures and traditions

Policy Dated May 2026

- exploring kindness, friendship and fairness through stories and role play
- experiencing different viewpoints and beliefs in a safe and respectful environment
- participating in whole-school celebrations and community events
- developing communication and self-expression through discussion, symbols and AAC.

A strong focus is placed on helping pupils understand that people may have different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions, and that these differences should be respected.

## 6. Parental Engagement

Parents and carers are encouraged to take an active role in supporting Religious Education and celebration-based learning across the school.

Families are invited to participate in:

- celebration events
- stay-and-play sessions
- craft and sensory activities
- shared cultural experiences linked to religious festivals and traditions.

These opportunities support pupils to revisit learning through familiar people, shared experiences and meaningful participation.

As part of the continued development of the RE curriculum, the school aims to introduce family workshop sessions linked to key celebrations and festivals. These may include:

- Diwali light workshops
- Christmas traditions around the world
- Eid sensory cooking sessions
- Holi colour exploration activities.

These sessions will help families understand how sensory, experiential and celebration-based activities support pupils' learning, communication and understanding within Religious Education.

The school also aims to develop "Experience Boxes" to support home learning and engagement. These small take-home sensory RE bags may include:

- symbols and photographs
- sensory objects and artefacts
- simple communication cards
- "talk together" prompts for families.

These resources will be particularly supportive for:

- non-verbal pupils
- pupils using AAC
- pupils who benefit from repetition and revisiting experiences across home and school environments.

The school values the experiences and backgrounds of families and encourages opportunities for parents and carers to contribute to celebration activities, traditions and community learning where appropriate.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education and collective worship.

## 7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE Lead monitors the quality and impact of Religious Education through:

- lesson observations
- learning walks
- planning scrutiny
- book scrutiny
- evidence and learning journal reviews
- pupil voice and engagement observations
- discussions with staff
- monitoring of celebration events and enrichment activities
- reviewing assessment information, including SOLAR and AET progression data
- supporting staff with curriculum development and teaching approaches.

Monitoring focuses on ensuring that Religious Education is:

- accessible and meaningful for all pupils
- appropriately adapted for SEND learners
- promoting engagement, communication and participation
- supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- providing opportunities for real-life and sensory experiences.

## 8. Collective Worship

Collective worship at Bracken Hill School contributes to the spiritual and community life of the school and is delivered in ways that are meaningful and accessible for all pupils.

Collective worship takes place daily, although this may be delivered in different formats depending on pupils' needs, including whole-school, class-based or small group sessions.

In Key Stage 3 and above, collective worship is regularly experienced through the saying of grace and the Lord's Prayer before lunch. This provides pupils with a familiar opportunity for reflection and shared experience.

Pupils in the Adventurers and Pioneers pathways also take part in assemblies using Picture News, supporting discussion around current events, diversity, fairness, community and respect.

Collective worship is broadly Christian in character, while also providing opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect on other religions and beliefs.

Pupils participate in ways appropriate to their communication, sensory and developmental needs, including:

- listening
- joining in with familiar words or actions
- using symbols or AAC
- quiet reflection.

Collective worship supports the development of shared values such as kindness, respect and community, which are central to the ethos of the school.

## 9. Legal Framework

Religious Education is statutory unless withdrawn by parents or carers.

Schools follow the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus determined by SACRE.

RE forms part of the basic curriculum but is not part of the National Curriculum.