



# Self Evaluation Form

## Subject: Religious Education

### School Context

Katherine Semar Infant and Junior Schools serve an established and settled residential area in Saffron Walden. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are better than the average nationally although lower than the other schools in our local cluster. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is slightly below average although many families are on low incomes and need support through regular food banks and uniform referrals. The majority of parents are supportive but a significant minority have low aspirations and this has an impact on their support for their children's academic progress and on the extent to which they become involved in their children's learning. As a result of this, some of the pupil premium supports these families financially through clubs and educational visits. We have identified that 20% of our pupils have home lives that may negatively affect their school life and sometimes their ability to thrive (adverse childhood experiences). Significant work is completed to support these children through learning mentors and our school listening service as well as more recently employing a family engagement champion, who works with our most vulnerable children on improving attendance. A significant minority of our families live in the flats surrounding schools in overcrowded, damp accommodation without access to a garden.

Unfortunately, we have had a high number of parents within our school community who have died or have been diagnosed with a life limiting condition. Within the last five years, we have had eleven children who have had a parent who has died. We have received support from charities like Winston's wish and our school educational psychologist. Currently we have two children who are supporting a parent cope with multiple sclerosis and we have ten children in last two years whose parent has been diagnosed with cancer. In the infant school, we also have a child whose father is receiving specialist care and hoping that may prolong his life for six months. We have used our school play therapist to support these children and we have two trained learning mentors who have received additional training on grief and bereavement. We have looked at our PSHE curriculum and worked on the zones of regulation as well as work on grief and bereavement to support the children in our school. We have re-designed our curriculum and changed the books in Year Three as we felt 'The Wild Way home' was triggering for the two children whose Mothers have recently died. In Year Two, three of the children can be dysregulated for sustained periods of time and we are continually looking for the best ways to support them with their grief.

The largest ethnic groups are White British (75.98%) and any other white background (16%). Mixed White & Asian (1.44%), Mixed White & Black Caribbean (1.15%). Mixed White & Black African (0.92%), Mixed any other mixed background (2.07%). The percentage of children who are not white British has increased by 6.2% since last year. This school has 12 out of 17 possible ethnic groups. The average number of groups for this phase of education is identified as 9 so we like to celebrate our cultural diversity. Staff retention is very high. This means the shared vision and ethos is well-developed as staff have built this vision with staff team. Monitoring, evaluation and review has happened in a cycle where each subject has a deep dive on a rolling programme which has happened for the past 12 years so experienced subject leaders know their subject's strengths and areas for development well.

The school currently holds:  
The Healthy Schools' Enhanced Award  
Sports Mark – Platinum Award  
Music Mark  
Philosophy for children Silver Award

Katherine Semar Infant and Junior Schools are not faith schools but our ethos is broadly Christian. We have close links with St Mary's Church, which is the nearest Anglican Church, as well as the community church and the Baptist church regularly having assemblies from the Saffron Walden assemblies team. Inclusion is a school priority and we welcome and value diversity. We are particularly keen to build on the supportive relationships we have forged with many partners involved with the school. The school focuses on promoting high academic achievement, providing plentiful opportunities for sport and exercise, creative arts and personal development. Promoting good health is a school priority.

Saffron Walden and the local surrounding area does not have any specialist provision locally and consequently we have a number of children with severe and complex needs who are seeking specialist provision. The LA have placed them in our school whilst looking for a specialist setting. In response to this the Trust are looking at providing specialist provision but this is in an early stage of planning.

The infant and junior schools work extremely closely to further enhance the continuity for children and cohesive community provision. The infant and junior school operate as one school, which has been developing since 2011 when Julie Puxley became the headteacher. This has been further enhanced by Julie Puxley becoming executive headteacher in 2017 of the Junior school and infant school as well as the rest of Senior Leadership Team working across both schools. The children have a smooth transition from Year 2 to Year 3 and beyond. There is now a single governing body, policies, procedures and governor training is aligned. We continue to have a joint website and joint weekly newsletter for parents. We have shared co-ordinator posts, enriching subject leadership. Planned, shared staff meetings and training are of a high quality and create continuous professional development for staff. There is a deeper understanding of the progression of learning between key stages and shared assessment methods. The SLT work together daily to enhance provision in classrooms, using staff specialisms. Due to high staff retention the shared vision and ethos is well-developed as staff have built this vision with key stakeholders over a number of years.

### Baseline

#### **Understanding the World People and Communities**

60% EXS+ 3% GDS

**Listening** 72% EXS+ Listening 29% GDS

**Speaking** 67% EXS+ Speaking 17% GDS

**Understanding** 74% EXS+ Understanding 25% GDS

## School vision

### School Values

Our curriculum cannot be separated from our school's core values: be kind, be confident, be curious, be positive, be respectful and be resilient. These permeate all aspects of school life and underpin our school curriculum. Although these are directly taught within our curriculum they are also 'lived' throughout our school and effectively create the culture that allows our curriculum to be successful.

### Curriculum Aims

Alongside our school values we have a set of aims for our school curriculum. These are the key threads that underpin and link our children's curriculum experiences together. We want children to: question; challenge themselves and each other; investigate the world around them; experience the world first hand; communicate effectively; and seek to develop their understanding of themselves, each other and the world around them. These aims were developed by and for the school community; parents, teachers, staff and governors collaborated to create our INSPIRE curriculum aims.



## Intent

At Katherine Semar Schools, RE is a valuable part of the curriculum offering opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others – individually, communally and cross culturally. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge discrimination.

In-line with The Essex agreed syllabus for religious education 2015 we aim to ensure pupils:

- engage with challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics, and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.

- build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- learn to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.

### Implementation

In 2019, we decided that there was too much content in the curriculum and we needed to cover each aspect in more depth rather than try to fit in so much content. An analysis was completed to streamline our curriculum whilst ensuring we still had a broad and balanced curriculum covering all important world religions with an emphasis on the religions in our school.

#### Cross-curricular learning and real world contexts.

- Wherever possible, a cross-curricular approach will be taken to the teaching of RE. Lessons will often be linked to children's learning in English, History, PSHE or Geography.
- We understand that our world is constantly changing and wherever possible, real time issues and topics will be explored throughout our RE curriculum.

#### Key learning experiences

- We understand that first-hand experience is an essential element of an outstanding RE curriculum and therefore ensure it is a high priority for all learners.
- Visiting places of worship, meeting religious believers and exploring artefacts ensures children gain these first-hand experiences.

#### Challenge and Support for all Learners

- We understand that every learner develops differently, and we adapt our provision continuously to ensure every child receives the correct balance of support and challenge in order to achieve their very best. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children (including those who may be gifted and talented or have additional needs) by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

### Impact

RE	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Updated July 2023	KS1 Average	KS2 Average
Total	59	60	60	60	61	78	Total	60	65
Foundation%							Foundation%		
Working Towards%	8	10	10	8	5	4	Working Towards%	9	7
Expected + %	92	90	90	92	95	96	Expected + %	91	93
Higher Standard%		27	32	40	39	27	Higher Standard%	13	34
<b>Disadvantaged</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>Disadvantaged</b>	-	

<b>Total</b>	5	8	9	6	9	5	<b>Total</b>	7	7
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%	20	38	22	67	11		Working Towards%	29	25
Expected + %	80	63	78	33	89	100	Expected + %	71	75
Higher Standard%		13			22	20	Higher Standard%	6	11

<b>Not Disadvantaged</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>Not Disadvantaged</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	54	52	51	54	52	73	<b>Total</b>	53	58
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%	7	6	8	2	4	4	Working Towards%	7	4
Expected + %	93	94	92	98	96	96	Expected + %	93	96
Higher Standard%		29	37	44	42	27	Higher Standard%	14	38

<b>SEN</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>SEN</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	4	4	5	7	9	6	<b>Total</b>	4	7
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%	100	50	60	43	22	33	Working Towards%	75	40
Expected + %		50	40	57	78	67	Expected + %	25	60
Higher Standard%						17	Higher Standard%		4

<b>Not SEN</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>Not SEN</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	55	56	55	53	52	72	<b>Total</b>	56	58
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%	2	7	5	4	2	1	Working Towards%	4	3
Expected + %	98	93	95	96	98	99	Expected + %	96	97
Higher Standard%		29	35	45	46	28	Higher Standard%	14	38

<b>EAL</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>EAL</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	8	11	7	10	10	15	<b>Total</b>	10	11
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%		18				13	Working Towards%	9	3
Expected + %	100	82	100	100	100	87	Expected + %	91	97
Higher Standard%		18	43	10	50	20	Higher Standard%	9	31

<b>Not EAL</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>Not EAL</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	51	49	53	50	51	63	<b>Total</b>	50	54
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%	10	8	11	10	6	2	Working Towards%	9	7
Expected + %	90	92	89	90	94	98	Expected + %	91	93
Higher Standard%		29	30	46	37	29	Higher Standard%	14	36

<b>Boys</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>Boys</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	29	32	20	29	28	40	<b>Total</b>	31	29
<b>Foundation%</b>							<b>Foundation%</b>		
Working Towards%	17	13	10	14	7	5	Working Towards%	15	9
Expected + %	83	88	90	86	93	95	Expected + %	85	91
Higher Standard%		16	25	38	29	18	Higher Standard%	8	27

<b>Girls</b>	-	-	-	-	-		<b>Girls</b>	-	
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Total	30	28	40	31	33	38	Total	29	36
Foundation%							Foundation%		
Working Towards%		7	10	3	3	3	Working Towards%	4	5
Expected + %	100	93	90	97	97	97	Expected + %	96	95
Higher Standard%		39	35	42	48	37	Higher Standard%	20	41

### Other commentary

A low percentage of children are working below in every year group, year 4s have a slightly higher percentage (19%).

All year groups except years 4 and 6 have a low percentage of children working and a higher standard.

Lowest percentage of children working at a higher standard in R.E.

40% of PPG children in year 3 (10) are working below in R.E.

There is a low percentage of children assessed as working at a higher standard in R.E. across the school.

### Significant developments in the subject

At Katherine Semar Schools, our R.E. curriculum follows the Essex Agreed Syllabus for R.E. (2023).

Early years milestones incorporated into subject progression document when we created it 2023.

The school was selected to take part in "Excellent RE", an exciting project offering schools a chance to be part of national research, and also to **audit, develop and improve their RE curriculum**. RE Today and NATRE received generous funding from the Templeton foundation for its 'Big Questions in Classrooms' project. Excellent RE provided **free, sustained CPD** to introduce participating schools to exploring religion and worldviews through multi-disciplinary RE. In addition, schools had the opportunity to examine their whole curriculum offer and decide on priorities for improvement (commencing in January 2022).

Following the announcement from Essex LA for all to schools to implement the new Essex SACRE Agreed Syllabus by September 2023, the Saffron Academy Trust has written a comprehensive and complete scheme of work which provides primary schools with detailed lesson plans, a suite of resources and supporting PowerPoints for all units from EYFS to Year 6. It is an enquiry-led, multi-faith syllabus viewed, considered and explored through three distinct lenses.

This was a really successful initiative and we were asked to sell it to other schools by the LA and offer training. We have already sold to 180 other schools.

### Strengths

- A real strength of our R.E. curriculum are the enrichment visits which accompany the childrens' learning and develop a deeper understanding of their work. These include both local visits to St. Mary's church in Saffron Walden to others further afield for example to Hindu temple in west London.
- There are also learning opportunities for older pupils with other Saffron Walden schools at the Baptist church or the annual Holocaust Remembrance Service for all year 6 pupils.
- Both schools have regular visits each term from the Saffron Walden Assembly Team (representatives from Saffron Walden churches).

- A wide range of educational trips and visitors relate to and enrich learning and Tier 3 vocabulary acquisition in RE. These often act as a launch or land to a unit of learning in RE.
- Strong links with local churches including the Baptist church and St Mary's Church.
- Our usual trip to Hindu temple was enjoyed by Year Four.
- Saffron Walden Assembly Team (from local churches) come to deliver regular assemblies in both schools.
- In May 2023, the Year 3 visit to the Cambridge Central Mosque proved very successful and this will become a regular visit from this year onwards.

### Areas for development

- Continuing to embed SAT curriculum.
- Use IRIS to share best practice of teaching.

### Monitoring and evaluation systems

#### OUR MONITORING – How will we monitor the effectiveness of our R.E. policy?

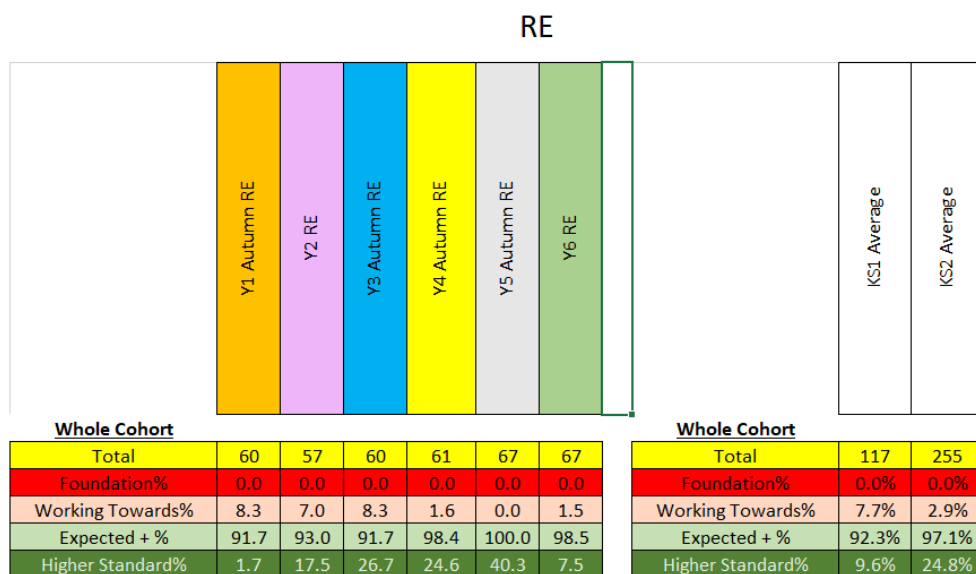
Through our annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Review cycle, we employ the following monitoring activities in R.E:

- **Lesson Observations and Learning Walks**

Senior Leaders and Subject Co-ordinators regularly undertake planned and unplanned lesson observations and learning walks. These have a clear focus and feedback and findings are used to inform individual and whole-school Continuing Professional Development (CPD), School Development Planning and future monitoring activities.

- **MAPP (Mapping attainment and progress for pupils)**

We use MAPP to assess children's progress against the expectations of our INSPIRE curriculum. We assess children against both the requirements and standards of the National Curriculum as well as our school's own raised expectations for all children. This is analysed annually and used to inform our school development plan. For example: Taken from MAPP (Jan 2022)



The data is analysed further to monitor the progress of different categories of disadvantaged children and also used to inform planning and classroom practice.

- **Work Scrutinies**

Work scrutinies are carried out by subject coordinators, Senior Leadership Team and whole staff.

- **Pupil Conferences**

Every child from Year Two to Six has a learning mentor from the senior leadership team. They have individual pupil conferences each term which supports children to take ownership of their own learning, review their progress and set themselves development targets.

- **Governor Visits**

As part of the Governors' Monitoring, Evaluation and Review cycle, lead governors in each subject, make regular visits to school to monitor progress towards the school development plan.

Monitoring activities include a range of teaching and learning observations, discussions with subject co-ordinators, meetings with pupils, visits to subject specific celebration assemblies, work scrutinies and subject leader reports.

- **Pupil interviews**

Senior staff, subject co-ordinators and governors take regular opportunities to listen to the views of pupils in relation to their experience of English at our school and their feedback actively informs subject development through our curriculum action plan.

## SMSC

### Spiritual:

- Becoming familiar with what 'spiritual' means in the religions they study e.g. use of silence and meditation.
- Experience spiritual moments in religious worship e.g. worship on different faith.
- Exploring the insights, beliefs and teaching of faith traditions.
- Exploring beliefs and values, through stories, celebrations, rituals and practices.
- Reflecting on what they learn about religions.
- Developing their own beliefs and values.
- Valuing intuition.
- Appreciating the beauty and order of natural and human made world.
- Responding to their world with awe and wonder.
- Asking ultimate questions – responding to the challenging experiences of life, death, suffering, goodness, evil and be challenged by the different answers offered by Christianity.
- Expressing their thoughts creatively.
- Being aware of things other than the material and physical.
- Encourage an understanding and respect for those who hold views different from their own.

### Moral:

- Looking at the examples set by characters in religious stories.
- Discussing the moral teaching of founders and leaders.
- Exploring key themes in religious stories e.g. good and evil.
- Reflecting on the teaching in moral codes: what is right and wrong?
- Learning that there may be more than one side to moral argument.

### Social:

- Learning about different religious communities and how they work together.
- Hearing religious stories which show a variety of relationships.

- Understanding how religious moral codes bind a community together.
- Exploring events e.g. ceremonies and festivals, which bring communities together.
- Discussing religious attitudes to social and environmental issues.
- Knowing and understanding importance of family and traditions within religious faiths.

**Cultural:**

- Exploring Britain as a multi-faith, multi-cultural society.
- Discussing how peoples' beliefs and cultural traditions affect the way they live their lives e.g. food, dress.
- Exploring religious traditions in their own community and how these shape people's lives.
- Using the arts as a stimulus.
- Representing work in various artistic forms.
- Meeting people of a variety of faiths and cultures and visiting places of worship.
- Looking at different attitudes to animals and environment in different cultures.

**Training**

Please see Training Folder.

**Enrichment**

The R.E. curriculum is enriched by both visitors to the school and visits to places which develop and deepen their learning. These often act as a launch or land to a unit of learning in RE.

Strong links with local churches including the Baptist church and St Mary's Church.

Our usual trip to Hindu temple was enjoyed by Year Four. In May 2023, the Year 3 visit to the Cambridge Central Mosque proved very successful and this will become a regular visit from this year onwards.

Saffron Walden Assembly Team (from local churches) come to deliver regular assemblies in both schools. This was suspended because of Covid-19 but we are delighted these have now resumed.