Diocese of Chelmsford
Vine Schools Trust

Religious Education (RE) Policy

St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Reviewed: [June 2025]
Next Review: [June 2027]
Approved by: Governing Body & Headteacher

Diocese of Chelmsford
Vine Schools Trust

1. Vision and Ethos

At St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Religious Education (RE) is a core and valued part of our curriculum. It reflects our Christian foundation and supports our mission to provide every child with the opportunity to flourish and live "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). Our RE provision helps children to explore meaning, develop respect for others, and live well together.

As a Church school, we offer RE with generous hospitality—faithful to Christian teaching while also respecting the integrity of all religious traditions and worldviews. We aim to nurture open hearts and minds, fostering pupils' understanding of themselves, their community, and the wider world.

At St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, we are a nurturing and inclusive community where every individual is encouraged and supported to develop determination, resilience, kindness, and courage—to try their best and *be* their best. Our theologically rooted Christian vision, inspired by Joshua 1:9, is central to who we are and all we do.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
(Joshua 1:9)

This verse reminds us that, just as God guided Joshua through daunting challenges, we too are called to face life with strength, faith, and courage. As a Church school, we draw inspiration from Joshua's trust in God and his unwavering determination.

Our core Christian values—respect, kindness, determination, and hope—bring this vision to life every day, helping all members of our community to flourish and *be the best that they can be*. Since embedding this vision, we have seen measurable improvements in pupils' resilience, ambition, attainment, and

progress. Positive changes in behaviour and attendance have also been noted, supported by a deepening focus on healthy, nurturing relationships within the school.

Our Christian vision aligns closely with the Vine Schools Trust's commitment to empowering all to flourish, nurturing faith rooted in God's love, delivering an ambitious curriculum, valuing community, and celebrating uniqueness.

2. Aims and Purpose of Religious Education

Religious Education at St. Andrew's enables pupils to:

- Engage deeply with the Christian faith and its impact on individuals and communities.
- Explore and respect a range of religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Reflect critically and personally on big questions of meaning, purpose, truth, and identity.
- Develop their own beliefs and values while appreciating the beliefs of others.
- Contribute positively to our diverse society by developing respect, empathy, and understanding.

RE equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate the complexities of belief, belonging, and behaviour in modern Britain.

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3. Our Three Lenses of Religious Education

At St. Andrew's, we teach RE through three academic lenses—Theology, Philosophy, and Human/Social Sciences. These lenses help pupils to explore

religion and belief from different angles, making connections between sacred texts, human experience, and big questions of life.

The Theological Lens

"What do people believe about God?"

Theological enquiry invites pupils to study religious beliefs and practices through the lens of faith traditions. In particular, pupils investigate how Christian beliefs are formed, expressed and lived—exploring scripture, teachings, symbols, rituals, and prayer. Children examine key concepts such as Creation, Incarnation, Salvation, and the Kingdom of God.

They also engage with the beliefs of other world faiths such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism, exploring how followers understand God, the divine, or ultimate reality.

Pupils learn to:

- Handle sacred texts respectfully and interpret their meaning.
- Identify theological ideas and connect them with lived experience.
- Recognise how belief shapes identity and actions.

The Philosophical Lens

"How do we know what is true?"

Philosophical enquiry develops children's thinking about fundamental questions of truth, meaning, and existence. Pupils explore concepts such as belief, reality, knowledge, justice, good and evil, and personal identity.

This lens helps children to:

- Ask thoughtful questions and consider multiple perspectives.

- Reason, argue, and evaluate ideas.
- Develop their own viewpoints and express them respectfully.

Through this lens, children are encouraged to wrestle with questions like:

- Is seeing believing?
- Can people with different beliefs live in peace?
- Is it reasonable to believe in God?

They explore both religious and non-religious responses, including those from Humanist and secular perspectives.

The Human/Social Science Lens

"How do people live out their beliefs?"

This lens examines how beliefs are lived out in the real world—at home, in communities, and in wider society. Pupils investigate how faith and worldview influence daily life, culture, rituals, celebrations, and moral choices.

They look at:

- How belonging to a faith shapes identity and relationships.
- How religious people respond to issues like poverty, justice, or the environment.
- The role of religion in local and global contexts.

Children learn to:

- Make connections between belief and action.
- Understand religion as a dynamic and diverse human experience.

- Appreciate the impact of worldview on individuals and communities.

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4. Curriculum Content and Organisation

Our RE curriculum is based on a two-year rolling programme, aligned with the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement and local agreed syllabus. It draws from Understanding Christianity, Norfolk and Sandwell Agreed Syllabus, and NATRE resources, ensuring robust coverage of Christianity and other major world religions and worldviews.

At St Andrew's, our curriculum has been carefully planned to ensure breadth, balance and progression over time. We follow a two-year rolling programme to ensure full coverage of statutory requirements across mixed-age classes. (See Appendix 1)

- Christianity is the core focus, making up at least 50% of curriculum time, in line with the Statement of Entitlement. (See Appendix 2)
- In Key Stage 1, we focus on Judaism as our second main religion. This lays essential foundations for understanding the Abrahamic faiths, as it is where many of the shared stories and beliefs between Christianity and Islam begin. Pupils also encounter Hinduism and Islam in preparation for further study in KS2.
- In Key Stage 2, we study Islam in greater depth, which reflects its position as the second most practised faith in our local area. We also explore Hinduism as a major Dharmic tradition, broadening pupils' understanding of global religions.
- In addition, pupils engage with Humanism, Buddhism and Sikhism, ensuring that religious and non-religious worldviews are both represented in a broad and inclusive curriculum.

Our curriculum has been sequenced to build on prior knowledge and support progression across all three disciplinary lenses—theological, philosophical and

human/social—so that pupils revisit key concepts over time in deeper and more nuanced ways.

We regularly review and adapt the curriculum in light of pupil voice, local context and current issues, ensuring it remains relevant, inclusive and ambitious.

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5. Teaching and Learning Approach

RE is taught weekly by class teachers and follows an enquiry-based approach. Lessons are active, inclusive, and creative, using storytelling, drama, role-play, discussion, debate, art, and written reflection. Children engage with real-life questions and explore belief in a safe and supportive environment.

Each unit:

- Uses one or more of the three lenses to shape enquiry.
- Encourages pupils to make connections between beliefs, lived experiences, and their own lives.
- Promotes curiosity, respect, and critical thinking.

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6. Assessment and Monitoring

Assessment is formative and ongoing. Teachers assess how well pupils can recall, explain, reflect, and apply key knowledge and skills in each lens. Assessment focuses on:

- Theological understanding (knowing what people believe).
- Philosophical thinking (questioning, reasoning, evaluating).

- Human/social understanding (observing how belief shapes life).

We use end-of-unit outcomes, pupil voice, and work sampling to inform planning and report to parents. The subject leader monitors RE through observations, planning reviews, and staff support.

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7. Inclusion, Equality and Respect

RE at St. Andrew's is inclusive and accessible for all. We celebrate diversity and are committed to anti-racist, anti-discriminatory teaching. Lessons are adapted for children with additional needs, and all children are encouraged to express their views and experiences respectfully.

We aim to ensure pupils see themselves reflected in what they learn, and develop an awareness of both shared human values and differences of belief.

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8. Real-World Connections and Community Links

We recognise the importance of connecting classroom learning to the wider world. Where possible, our RE teaching is enriched through:

- Visits to local places of worship, including churches and, where feasible, mosques, synagogues or temples.
- Inviting speakers or representatives from different faiths and worldviews to share their experiences.
- Engaging with RE resources such as BBC Bitesize, RE: Quest, RE Online, NATRE, RE Today and Anti-Racist RE to ensure learning is up to date and relevant.
- Using RE as a springboard for cross-curricular projects, particularly linking with PSHE, History, Art and English.

These opportunities help children to develop real-world religious literacy, challenge stereotypes and appreciate the diversity of belief and practice within and beyond their own community.

9. Links to Worship, SMSC and British Values

RE supports and enriches collective worship by deepening understanding of Christian festivals, values, and stories. It contributes significantly to spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

RE helps promote British values including:

- Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Respect for individual liberty and the rule of law.
- Mutual respect and understanding.

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10. Right of Withdrawal

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE, in accordance with the 1996 Education Act. We invite parents considering this to discuss the matter with the Headteacher, as we believe RE at St. Andrew's offers a broad, respectful and inclusive exploration of belief that supports children's all-round development.

St Andrew's Primary School
RE Curriculum Overview

At St Andrew's, we believe that Religious Education (RE) helps children make sense of the world, reflect on their own beliefs and develop respect for others. Our curriculum supports children to explore *big life questions* and understand a wide range of beliefs and traditions.

Our Approach

RE at St Andrew's is built around three key lenses of learning. Each unit of work links to one or more of these:

Theology – *What do people believe about God?*

- This lens focuses on understanding the core beliefs of different religions.
- Children explore *sacred texts*, teachings, symbols, and stories.
- For example, they might learn what Christians believe about Jesus, or how Hindus describe God through different deities.

Philosophy – *How do people think about questions of life and meaning?*

- This lens helps children think deeply and ask big questions about *truth, knowledge, right and wrong, and human purpose*.
- It encourages critical thinking and personal reflection.
- Philosophy allows space for *non-religious worldviews* like Humanism.

Human/Social Sciences – *How do beliefs affect people's lives?*

- This lens focuses on how religion is *lived out* in the real world.
- Children learn about festivals, practices, community life, and the impact of faith in society.
- It encourages awareness and appreciation of diversity.

Resources We Use

To support rich, inclusive and engaging RE, we draw from a variety of well-regarded resources:

- Understanding Christianity (UC)
  A detailed programme supporting strong, thoughtful teaching of Christian beliefs, values and Bible stories.
- Sandwell and Essex SACRE
  Locally agreed syllabuses ensuring fair and thorough coverage of major world religions. Sandwell is particularly strong on progression and inclusion.
- SATRE (Sandwell Agreed Teaching RE)
  Provides age-appropriate, enquiry-based lessons with links to real-world issues and personal development.
- NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE)
  A trusted national organisation offering up-to-date resources, training and support for excellent RE practice.
- RE:Online and RE Today
  Two websites filled with reliable teaching materials, planning tools and video clips that help bring RE to life.
- BBC Bitesize and BBC Religion & Ethics
  Clear, child-friendly videos and articles exploring beliefs, practices and festivals in different religions.
- RE:Quest
  A Christian resource helping pupils understand Christian beliefs from a faith perspective using videos and real-life stories.
- Anti-Racist RE (NATRE)
  Helps children explore identity, fairness and justice while learning about and celebrating religious and cultural diversity.

Each class explores key questions through stories, celebrations, traditions, and thoughtful discussions. Here's what your child will be learning this year:

Mulberry Class

Year A – What We Learn	Lens	Year B – What We Learn	Lens
Why is the word God so important to Christians? – Exploring what Christians believe about God and why God is central to their faith.	Theology & Philosophy	**Why is the word God so important to Christians? –** Exploring what Christians believe about God and why God is central to their faith.	Theology & Philosophy
Why do some Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas? – Learning about the birth of Jesus and how Christians celebrate this special story.	Theology & Philosophy	**Why do some Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas?** – Learning about the birth of Jesus and how Christians celebrate this special story.	Theology & Philosophy
Where do we belong? – Exploring identity and community in Christianity, Hinduism and Islam	Theology & Philosophy	**Where do we belong? –** Exploring identity and community in Christianity, Hinduism and Islam	Theology & Philosophy
Why do some Christians put a cross on the Easter garden? – Discovering how Christians remember the Easter story and what the cross means to them.	Theology & Philosophy	**Why do some Christians put a cross on the Easter garden? –** Discovering how Christians remember the Easter story and what the cross means to them.	Theology & Philosophy
Which places are special and why? – Learning about special places in different religions	Theology & Philosophy	**Which places are special and why?** – Learning about special places in different religions	Theology & Philosophy
Which stories are special and why? – Discovering stories that guide people of faith	Theology & Philosophy	**Which stories are special and why? –** Discovering stories that guide people of faith	Theology & Philosophy

Apple Class

Year A – What We Learn	Lens	Year B – What We Learn	Lens
Who made the world? – Exploring Christian beliefs about creation	Philosophy	**How do Jews belong to their faith family?** – Learning about Jewish traditions and belonging	Human/Social Science
Why is light important to different faiths? – Exploring festivals and meaning	Theology	**Why does Christmas matter to Christians?** – Understanding what the Nativity teaches Christians	Theology
How do Jewish people celebrate Passover? – Learning about Jewish traditions	Human/Social Science	**How do celebrations bring communities together?** – Exploring shared celebrations in faiths	Human/Social Science
What do my senses tell me about the world of religion and belief? – Exploring sights, sounds and rituals	Philosophy	**Why does Easter matter to Christians?** – Understanding the story and symbol of the cross	Theology
What do Jews remember on Shabbat? – Learning about the Sabbath	Theology	**Why do people have different views about the idea of God?** – Exploring beliefs across different religions	Philosophy
What is the Good News that the Gospel brings? – Understanding Christian messages of kindness and love	Theology	Extended discussion on views about God	Philosophy

Cherry Class

Year A – What We Learn	Lens	Year B – What We Learn	Lens
How do people express commitment to a religion/worldview in different ways? – Exploring how people show faith	Human/Social Science	**What do Christians learn from the Creation Story?** – Understanding Christian views on creation	Theology
What is the Trinity? – Learning about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit	Theology	**What is philosophy?** – Learning to think deeply about beliefs	Philosophy
What do Muslims believe about God? – Exploring key Islamic beliefs	Theology	**Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?** – Reflecting on Easter	Human/Social Science
What difference does being Muslim make to daily life? – Understanding Islamic daily life	Human/Social Science	**Why do people pray?** – Exploring how prayer connects people to faith	Philosophy
What is Philosophy? How do people make moral decisions? – Exploring choices through Christianity and Humanism	Philosophy	**Why do people make pilgrimages?** – Learning about spiritual journeys in faiths	Human/Social Science

Horse Chestnut Tree Class

Year A – What We Learn	Lens	Year B – What We Learn	Lens
Where do religious beliefs come from? – Learning about Jewish sacred texts	Theology	**What does it mean if God is holy and loving?** – Exploring Christian ideas about God	Theology
What is it like to follow God? – Understanding faith in action	Human/Social Science	**What do Hindus believe God is like?** – Exploring Hindu stories and images of God	Theology
What did Jesus do to save human beings? – Learning about Jesus' life and death	Theology	**What do we mean by 'truth'? Is seeing believing?** – Asking deep questions about truth	Philosophy
What kind of world did Jesus want? – Exploring Jesus' teachings	Theology	**How do Buddhists explain suffering?** – Learning about Buddhist teachings on life and suffering	Theology
How do religious groups contribute to society and culture? – Looking at impact of religion in culture	Human/Social Science	**How do Hindus make sense of the world?** – Understanding Hindu beliefs about life and meaning	Theology

Oak Class

Year A – What We Learn	Lens	Year B – What We Learn	Lens
Why do Hindus try to be good? – Exploring Hindu teachings on right and wrong	Theology	**Creation and science: Conflicting or complementary?** – Considering science and belief together	Theology & Philosophy
How do Sikhs interact with culture and society? – Learning about Sikh beliefs and community service	Human/Social Science	**Was Jesus the Messiah?** – Exploring Christian beliefs about Jesus' identity	Theology
What difference does the Resurrection make for Christians? – Understanding Easter's significance	Theology	**How and why does religion cause peace or conflict?** – Exploring religion in society today	Human/Social Science
What can we learn from great philosophers? – Asking life's big questions	Philosophy	**Anti-Racist RE** – Understanding faith, justice, and inclusion	Human/Social Science
Anti-Racist RE – Understanding faith, justice, and inclusion	Human/Social Science	**Is believing in God reasonable?** – Reflecting on Philosophical ideas, belief and doubt	Philosophy
What would Jesus do? – Exploring Christian responses to moral dilemmas	Theology		

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

Religious Education in Church of England Schools

A Statement of Entitlement

Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together

> *Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.*[1]

A high-quality sequential religious education[2] (RE) programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews[3] fostering respect for others. In voluntary aided schools, RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed: this document will help schools interpret that legal requirement. In foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, RE

[1] The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good.* (The Church of England Education Office, 2016), available at https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education

[2] Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. The term religious education (RE) is therefore used throughout this document as it is connected to the Section 48 SIAMS inspection and, if and until the law changes we will need to continue to use the term. This does not stop individual schools, MATs or dioceses using other names including Religion and Worldviews for the subject.

[3] The term worldviews is used throughout the document to refer to a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an 'institutional' worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a 'personal' worldview for an individual's way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from one or many institutionalised worldviews. Based on Commission on Religious Education, *Religion and worldviews: The way forward A national plan for RE* (Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018) p4.

must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus for RE unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school. In academies and free schools RE must be taught in accordance with the funding agreement.

The effectiveness of denominational education in Church schools is evaluated during the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) section 48 inspection. That subsequent judgement will reflect the expectations set out in this document. The SIAMS evaluation schedule assesses the way RE contributes to the outworking of 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. In addition, in voluntary aided schools, a judgement on standards in teaching and learning in RE is included in the SIAMS report.

The Entitlement: provision, profile and priority

In a Church school the pupils and their families can expect an RE curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, this should include the ways in which it is unique and diverse. Parents can expect the use of high-quality resources, for example, the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils can expect that teaching and learning in Church schools will use an approach that engages with biblical text and theological ideas.

Pupils can expect that a Church school RE curriculum will engage and challenge them through an exploration of core concepts and questions. They can expect Church schools to provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews. There should be opportunities for them to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help form identity in a range of religions and worldviews. Pupils should explore how these may change in different times, places and cultures. RE will go beyond a sociological study of religious phenomena and will introduce pupils to a range of relevant disciplines including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences. In all Church schools progress in RE should be significant and attainment high enabling pupils to develop confident religious literacy.

Parents and pupils can expect that in a Church school RE will have a high profile within the curriculum and will be a priority for senior leaders. The RE curriculum is intrinsic to the outworking of a Church school's Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, the RE curriculum will contribute to British values and spiritual moral social and cultural development

Learning activities must provide fully for the needs of all pupils. Pupils should develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Pupils should have a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They should have opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Curriculum statement: challenging, accurate and diverse

In all Church schools religious education must be considered an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. Pupils are entitled to a balanced RE curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews

through theology, philosophy and the human and the social sciences. It should be a coherent curriculum that enables progress through ordered and sequential learning developing both knowledge and skills. There should be a clear curriculum vision and intent, a structure for implementation and provision and a process for evaluating impact.

Aims and objectives

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Curriculum balance and time: sufficient, appropriate and balanced

Reflecting the school's trust deed or academy funding agreement parents and pupils are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1-4.

All pupils in Church schools should follow a recognised and appropriate qualification or course in RE or Religious Studies at KS 4. This includes pupils who have SEND. The study of Christianity will be a significant part of any Religious Studies qualification offered.

The school must make it possible for those students who achieve suitable grades at GCSE or equivalent to follow appropriate A level courses. This should be in addition to the provision of core RE entitlement for all students at KS5 which should continue to develop student's understanding of Christianity and other religions and worldviews.

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

Developing staff expertise and knowledge: confidence specialism professionalism

Pupils in Church schools are entitled to be taught by teachers who have a secure subject knowledge and are confident in helping them navigate and challenge cultural and religious stereotypes, prejudice and extremism. It should be a priority in Church schools to build up staff expertise in RE specifically, but not exclusively, working towards:

- at least one member of staff having RE qualifications or receiving specialist training.

- secondary schools employing specialist RE teachers and deploying them effectively to ensure pupils receive specialist teaching.
- all staff teaching RE having access to subject specific professional development.
- all staff teaching RE knowing how to create and maintain classrooms in which academic rigour is balanced with respect for different personal beliefs and identities.
- all teaching staff and governors understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.
- a governing body which is monitoring standards in RE effectively.

The role of the Diocesan Boards of Education

One function of Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) is to promote, or assist in the promotion of, religious education in schools in the diocese. This should be fulfilled by monitoring the quality of religious education in Church schools through taking note of SIAMS inspection reports and by securing high quality training for all schools throughout the diocese. This will help ensure that the provision for religious education is effective and is able to fulfil the expectations of this statement.

Support for effective and excellent RE

Teachers in Church schools belong to a wider educational and church community. They are entitled to expect positive support in providing effective and excellent religious education from:

- a named member of staff responsible for religious education and where that person is the headteacher someone who shadows the role
- their senior management team and their governing body, especially foundation governors or academy equivalents
- their local Diocesan Board of Education, including a school's adviser with an appropriate religious education background
- the Church of England Education Office
- local clergy and other minsters and Christian communities.

Derek Holloway
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