



Religious Education Policy

St John with St Michael Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School



Philosophy

"In Church of England schools the students and their families can expect a religious education curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Church schools should provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied. Church schools should use some form of enquiry approach that engages with, for example biblical text, and helps develop religious and theological literacy. Links with the Christian values of the school and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are intrinsic to the RE curriculum and should have a significant impact on learners."

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

Our mission at St John with St Michael CE Primary School is 'To promote the physical, mental, moral and spiritual development of the children in the light of the Christian Gospel.'

St John with St Michael Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School aims to provide a loving, caring, family environment where children feel inspired and safe. We know that every child matters — whatever their skills and abilities, whatever their background and whatever their aspirations. Belonging to a safe and nurturing community, founded on strong Christian values, we want our children to develop an array of skills. These skills will equip them to meet the challenges of our ever changing world by having an understanding of different faiths and beliefs to help us live together as a loving and caring community. By infusing our core values of friendship, creativity, compassion, resilience and respect we hope our children will make their own positive contribution to our global society.

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples.'
John 13.34-35

St John with St Michael Church of England Primary is a Voluntary Aided School. Therefore, the provision of RE must be provided in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School and in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided in the school. The Governors have adopted the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE which fulfils all legal requirements and the RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office 2016. This takes the form of 'Questful RE' and is supplemented by material from 'Understanding Christianity'.

The contribution of RE to the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of pupils is significant. In particular the RE curriculum should ensure there are opportunities for:

- Spiritual development, which enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment.
- Moral development based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.
- Social development, which enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice.
- Cultural development, which provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

Aims and Objectives of RE

The aims of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- *To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.*
- *To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.*
- *To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.*

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

Children should be supported in developing their ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry. This involves children going beyond the collecting of information about religion and belief. It involves them exploring the key ideas and crucial inner meanings within the religious material they are studying. It involves, in the case of Christianity, the exploration of key concepts such as incarnation, resurrection, salvation. It also involves the recognition of the diversity of different ways of thinking theologically within the Christian tradition.

Our RE curriculum aims to offer pupils opportunities to:

- reflect theologically and explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society;
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief;
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today;
- understand the challenge faced by Christians in today's pluralist and post-modern society;
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text;

- recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world;
- begin to develop their own commitments, beliefs and values;
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious;
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions;
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour;
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world;
- understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

Within the RE curriculum pupils should be taught the distinctively Christian foundation of our school core values, for example:

- during the 'Jesus Friend to everyone' unit children will discuss how Jesus demonstrated **friendship** to his disciples;
- in the 'What makes a person special?' unit children will have the chance to consider inspirational people who showed **resilience** to succeed;
- during the unit 'How did Jesus show his power and authority?' children consider how **respect** is shown to people in authority and times when it is right to challenge that authority as Jesus did;
- in the unit 'How does having faith affect a believer's lifestyle?' the children will research how ordinary people of faith have shown **compassion** through their actions;
- the unit 'God and Creation' is full of God's **creativity** as he created our world;

Through our RE curriculum we aim to help pupils to:

- learn *about* other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and *from* them through encounter and dialogue;
- recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God;
- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths;
- enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition;
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions.

RE content and time allocation

As a governing body we have adopted the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus – 'Questful RE' which reflects the National Framework for RE and supplement this with the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Christianity is the majority study in our Religious Education. Our study of religions other than Christianity will centre on the religions included within 'Questful RE' units, helping our children to link ideas within different faiths. These include Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism.

A minimum of 1 hour per week is timetabled in both Key Stages 1 and 2 for Religious Education but it is also taught implicitly at many times. The Foundation Stage has some discrete teaching during the week and is also provided for through continuous provision, using the 'Chatterbox' units from 'Questful RE'. The programme of units to be used at St John with St Michael can be found attached

at the end of this policy. Non- Christian faith units are clearly shown on the two-year rolling programme.

Although RE and Collective Worship naturally compliment one another, the Religious Education Syllabus is generally separate from Collective Worship, which is managed through its own policy. However, at times Collective Worship will enrich Religious Education e.g. through Christian Festivals and at other times pupil's reflections on their learning in RE will inspire their planning of worship for other classes.

Progression

It is important to recognise the progression through the school so that the children's understanding and appreciation develops as their maturity allows them to reflect and question their own beliefs and values. By using the Diocesan material, content areas are re-visited with increasingly complex ideas. For example, the main Christian Church festivals that are covered throughout the school in each class show progression. Teachers choose activities appropriate to the age group from the planning sheets in the syllabus.

Approach

We aim to support children to develop their own beliefs, values and attitudes through an exploration of shared human experience within a Christian environment. The children's learning and development will be helped by exploring religious beliefs and practices, with particular reference to the Church of England.

A wide range of activities are used within RE teaching – visits, experience days, handling artefacts, visual resources, role play, guided visualisation, discussions, story, dance, music, ICT resources, Godly Play and 'Chatterboxes'.

We learn about:

- God who reveals the truth about himself and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, his action in history and through the prophets;
- God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us;
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason.

We learn from:

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it;
- responding personally to the stories and teachings of Jesus Christ;
- examples of Christian living which give priority to the values of unconditional love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion and faith.

Reflection

There is a need to develop and refine beliefs and values. We expect children to mature in relation to their personal values by reflecting on religious beliefs and practices and their response to these aspects of shared human experiences such

as the natural world and relationships with others. A time to reflect is often built in to lessons and each classroom has a reflection area. Reflective spaces are also incorporated into different areas of the school building, our Ethos group changing these regularly and as appropriate.

Our Religious Education should enable:

- pupils and teachers to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule;
- pupils to make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity;
- pupils from Christian families to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith;
- pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith;
- pupils with no religious background to be given an insight into what it means to be a person of faith;
- pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society.

SEND provision

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.

Romans 12:6

In accordance with the Christian value of **justice**, we seek to ensure that potentially vulnerable members of our community still have access to a high quality RE curriculum. Therefore, we aim to ensure that activities are accessible in ways appropriate for particular children. Some pupils will have high levels of spiritual insight yet require ways of recording their learning appropriate to their literacy skills. Others will need support in retaining and sequencing information, whilst others will require help to develop a personal response to faith and religion. Whatever their need, every child has an entitlement to be taught the full range of subjects including RE.

Equal Opportunities

Religious Education allows time for the discussion of many equal opportunity issues such as discrimination by belief, ethnicity or social circumstance. In accordance with our value of **respect**, we aim to develop in the children an appreciation, understanding and respect for the rights, needs and feelings of others. Within the curriculum, there are opportunities for children to develop a heart of **compassion** for others who suffer discrimination: such as Christians in India in the 'Life as a Journey' unit.

Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting to Parents

An assessment and recording sheet is completed for each class half-termly. This shows which level of attainment the class is at, along with children with lower or higher achievement and those children who have missed a number of sessions. Judgements can be made in the following ways:

- From the general expectations for pupils' age and ability
- From an examination of pupil's work in other areas of the curriculum and comparing these with standards in R.E.

- From the quality and depth of discussion and questioning by the pupils: their understanding of religious concepts, especially those specified in the Scheme of work for R.E; their use of appropriate religious terminology.
- From the quality and depth of pupil's affective responses and interests.
- From the knowledge displayed by pupils, especially of the content specified by the school's scheme of work.

This ongoing assessment informs the summative end of unit assessment. These assessments are passed to the RE co-ordinator who uses them as part of the information about standards in RE, but also to monitor attainment in different aspects of the curriculum.

'Appropriate to age at the end of their education in Church schools the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and, as a minimum, pupils are able to:

- *Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.*
- *Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and worldviews in their search for God and meaning.*
- *Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.*
- *Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.'*

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

An annual written report, including a section on RE, is sent to parents during the Summer Term.

Resources

Resources are centralised and include CDs, DVDs, artefacts, reference books, assorted Bibles, picture books and works of art.

St. John's Church is a resource in itself and, despite its distance from school, is visited regularly by the children.

The subject leader should be informed of any gaps in resources as topics are covered.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Religious Education is the responsibility of the subject leader, in conjunction with colleagues and the SLT. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject leader, in conjunction with the SLT, monitors children's work and visits classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Staff Development

Local RE cluster meetings are attended by the RE subject leader, in order to keep her informed of developments in the subject.

Staff INSET is provided when necessary and referenced in the RE Action plan.

Evaluation

The units of study are reviewed as necessary.

The Legal Requirements for Religious Education

Religious education is governed by both the 1944 and 1988 Education Acts as well as by the school's Trust Deed.

This legislation requires Religious Education to be provided for all pupils (1988 Education Reform Act, Section 2(1)(a).) The type of Religious Education provided must be in accordance with the Trust Deed. (Church of England)

Arrangements for the withdrawal of pupils from R.E Teaching

'The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England. This foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and/or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school.'

If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Headteacher should explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation. It may be that only some elements of Religious Education or Worship are objected to.

Parents may request the governing board to provide Religious Education for their children according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. This can only be requested when parents cannot, with reasonable convenience, arrange for their children to attend another school where Religious Education is provided according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. The governing board **should** make provision unless the circumstances make it unreasonable to do so.

Should the governing board be unable to make such arrangements for Religious Education to be delivered according to the Agreed Syllabus, the responsibility for doing so then falls on the Local Authority. The Local Authority may decide that such a request for separate Religious Education is unreasonable and the parental request then fails.

Complaints about the Provision of Religious Education

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Head Teacher, in consultation with the Governors, and possibly with advice from the Diocese. However, if the complaint is not satisfactorily resolved then formal procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.

This policy has been developed by the RE co-ordinator in consultation with the Head teacher, staff and with approval from the governing body.

The document is based on:

'National Society Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education. 2016'

Signed:

Date: January 2019

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