



St. John's C. of E.

Blackpool's First Free School 1817

Religious Education Policy

Last updated: September 2021

Person responsible for policy: Mrs. J. Zinna

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Introduction

In St. John's Church of England Primary School, Blackpool, the Religious Education provided is in conformity with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England as laid down in the trust deed.

R.E. plays a major part in promoting the Christian aims, values and ethos of the school as expressed in our mission statement:

"Everyone matters in God's world."

The school has adopted the R.E. syllabus produced by the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education and the North Lancashire District of the Methodist Church.

Our school policy sets out a framework within which the teaching and non-teaching staff can operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It should be read in conjunction with the Scheme of Work, which sets out in detail what the children will be taught. This document is designed for all teaching staff, all staff with classroom responsibilities, school governors, inspection teams and LA adviser/inspectors. Electronic copies are available for all teachers and teaching support staff via Google Drive. Copies can be made available, on request, to supply / trainee teachers, governors and parents. Policies can also be found on our website and paper copies are available in the Policy folder held in the main office.

Aims

"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 world views 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

R.E. is an integral part of the ethos of St John's as expressed in the mission statement. Pupils are given a sound foundation in knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith as appropriate for their age and abilities. Through knowledge, discussion and thought, pupils are helped to explore and define their faith.

This is a multi-faith society where tolerance and reconciliation are vital. Children need to be taught to deal sensitively with the religious beliefs and practices of others, to value the richness of other faiths and learn to respect them. However, as a Church of England School the emphasis is on the Christian faith.

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.

RE at St John's also helps children:-

- 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 at St John's helps children:-

- 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.;

RE at St John's enables:

- 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.

RE's contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

At St John's, R.E. contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. These aspects of development can be found in many of the school curriculum areas, and are implicit in the ethos of the school.

- Spiritual development enriches and encourages pupils' discovery of God the Creator and wonder of the world.
- Moral development based on the teachings of Jesus offer pupils a secure foundation stone.
- Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where to love one another is put into practice.
- Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity worldwide and the impact on millions of people.

The contribution of RE to Christian and British values

At St John's the teaching of RE positively drives the promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

R.E.'s place in the Whole School Policy

In order to achieve the aims outlined previously, most of the R.E. syllabus at St. John's C.E. Primary School is taught as separate lessons but some is integrated into topic work or other subjects as is most appropriate.

The work is organised into topics, which are set down in the long term plan for each class. As a church school the emphasis in most lessons will be on Christianity, however time is allocated to the study of other faiths in line with the RE Statement of Entitlement.

"Christianity should be the majority study in RE in every school. In Church schools that should be clearly adhered to. KS 1 – 3 at least 2/3rds of RE curriculum is to be Christianity. 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%."

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

All children take part in whole school worship (please see Worship Policy). Denominational Collective Worship reinforces the Christian aims, values and ethos of the school. It reinforces the main events of the church year and revisits stories, ideas and themes.

Members of the clergy from St. John's Church, Blackpool, regularly visit the school to lead worship and teach children in school. Classes visit the church at key times of the year for services and for study. Visits from ministers of other faiths are also actively encouraged.

Resources

A variety of resources for R.E. are available through the school, the R.E. Co-ordinator has an up-to-date list of these. Some are located in individual classrooms, some in the library area and others by the R.E. Co-ordinator. The requirements of the Diocesan syllabus and the age and ability of the children in school leads to the use of the following types of resources:-

- ◆ The syllabus document.
- ◆ Teachers' books, articles, posters
- ◆ Books in the school library.
- ◆ ICT resources.
- ◆ Magazines - relevant articles and resources are distributed by the R.E. co-ordinator.
- ◆ Human resources - clergy (particularly from St. John's Church), advisors, visitors.

The R.E. co-ordinator has a budget for buying resources. The amount varies from year to year.

Recording and Reporting

Record keeping in R.E is carried out in line with the schools agreed Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy. Class teachers make their own formative assessments and submit one summative assessment each term.

Assessment

Assessment in R.E. is carried out in line with the schools agreed Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy.

Gathering evidence of pupils' attainment is an integral part of teaching and learning. From this evidence teachers are able to:-

- ◆ Identify what has been taught and, more importantly, learnt.
- ◆ Monitor pupils' progress in acquiring the knowledge, understanding and skills in R.E.
- ◆ Monitor pupils' progress in cross-curricular elements.
- ◆ Establish pupils' needs as a basis for future planning and teaching.

Teachers continually collect evidence of pupils' attainment in a variety of ways, including :-

- ◆ Observing a pupil at work, individually and in groups.
- ◆ Questioning, talking and listening to pupils.
- ◆ Considering materials produced by the pupils and discussing these with them.
- ◆ Marking children's work.
- ◆ Children's responses to key questions
- ◆ Children's comments in the RE scrapbooks

Involving children in assessing their own work helps them understand better their own strengths and needs. Pupils' self-esteem can be enhanced by an increasing awareness of their own progress.

Special Educational Needs

For general details with regard to provision for children with special educational needs please see our agreed Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented Policies.

The statutory inclusion statement of the National Curriculum requires staff to modify teaching and learning to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage.

We modify for less able children by

- ◆ choosing material from an early year group/key stage if appropriate.
- ◆ consolidating, reinforcing and generalising previous learning as well as introducing new knowledge, skills and understanding.
- ◆ using the Diocesan Syllabus as a resource for differentiation.
- ◆ focusing on a more limited range of elements within the syllabus if necessary.

We modify for more able pupils by

- ◆ choosing material from a later year group/key stage if appropriate.
- ◆ providing more open ended, investigative tasks.
- ◆ adding to the complexity of the tasks and concepts presented.
- ◆ using a wider and more demanding range of resources.
- ◆ using questioning to challenge rather than expecting them to produce more recorded work than other pupils.

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities at St. John's School is carried out according to our agreed Equality Policy.

All teaching and non-teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that all pupils irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the whole curriculum and opportunities to make the greatest possible progress in all areas of the curriculum whilst in our school.

The monitoring of the policy for Equality is ultimately the responsibility of the Head teacher and the Senior Management Team, but every member of staff is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the policy in terms of promoting good practice.

Parental Involvement

Parents are informed of the work being covered in R.E. through the topic webs sent home on a half termly basis. They are also welcomed into school to take part in collective worship and invited to special whole school occasions at St. John's Church; for example Harvest Festival, Carol Service, Easter Passion Play and the Leavers' Service.

INSET/Training Provision

INSET and training at St. John's School is carried out according to our agreed Staff Development Policy.

Staff development needs in R.E. are considered and planned for by the R.E and Staff Development Co-ordinators. These needs are identified through monitoring, curriculum review, evaluation and the system of performance management. These needs are highlighted as part of the co-ordinators' subject development plan, which subsequently becomes part of the School and Staff Development Plans. The effectiveness of training is evaluated by individual members of staff, supported by the co-ordinator.

Resourcing and Funding

This is done by the co-ordinator in line with priorities set in the School Development Plan and budgeting considerations.

The R.E. co-ordinator is responsible for maintaining and developing the R.E. resources and monitoring their usefulness. Resources are replaced and purchased by the R.E. Co-ordinator following the general school ordering procedures. The current lists of resources and staff requests/concerns are considered each year before requisitions are made. The purchase of R.E. resources each year is dependant on the R.E. budget, which is bid for as part of the Subject Development Plan from the whole school budget. The amount of R.E budget will change annually and reflects the degree of priority R.E. is given within the School Development Plan.

The R.E. Co-ordinator is also responsible for reviewing the resources and their storage annually in consultation with all staff.

The Role of the Co-ordinator

The R.E co-ordinator is responsible for

- Determining the aims of the school for the teaching of RE throughout the school and, in consultation with the Senior Management Team, staff and governors, devising objectives or targets to allow the school to achieve these aims. Documenting these aims and objectives within the school policy for RE.
- Ensuring that the Diocesan Guidelines for RE are known and understood by all teachers in the school.
- Ensuring all agreed methods of working in RE are put into practice and that staff regularly review these methods.
- Helping devise and document Schemes of Work for each year group in RE.
- Monitoring RE in the school, ensuring that the teaching of RE has its appropriate place in the broad and balanced curriculum of our school. This will include the monitoring of resources (including books, practical equipment, ICT soft and hardware), procedures (including timetables), teaching (including supportive lesson observation if appropriate) and planning.
- Monitoring the assessment, recording and reporting of RE throughout the school and supporting staff in reporting to parents if necessary.
- Undertaking an annual review of the RE curriculum in school as part of the School Development Planning process.
- Managing the budget allocation for RE and advising staff on resources.
- Through personal reading and attendance at courses, keeping abreast of developments and evaluate new ideas and approaches in RE.
- Keeping staff informed of such developments.
- Submitting reports to the governing board as required.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is carried out to enhance the teaching and learning of R.E. within our school. It is the responsibility of all staff to monitor and evaluate the curriculum provision made for R.E. within the school in order that pupils make the greatest possible progress. Formal or informal evaluations will be carried out at the end of each lesson by the class teacher and an evaluation of the overall curriculum (that the syllabus is fully implemented) is

carried out by the co-ordinator. As with all evaluation the Head teacher has overall responsibility for monitoring the work done.

An important element of the co-ordinators' role is that of monitoring the effectiveness of provision in R.E. Pupils' progress and performance is evaluated taking account of factors which may influence this, including teaching methods, resources, schemes of work and accommodation.

Monitoring takes place in a number of ways:

- ◆ an analysis of teachers' planning
- ◆ assessment of recorded work and displays
- ◆ classroom observation, if and when appropriate
- ◆ discussion with individuals or groups of children
- ◆ discussion with members of staff.

The RE co-ordinator maintains and regularly updates a whole school portfolio of work to demonstrate skill progression through the ladder of achievement and expected standards for each rung of the ladder.

Appendix

The legal requirements for Religious Education.

A. Legal requirements.

Religious Education in Church Schools is governed by the 1996 and 1998 Education Act as well as by the Trust Deed of the School.

The legislation requires Religious Education to be provided for all pupils (1996 Education Act, Section 352) The type of Religious Education provided must be in accordance with the Trust Deed.

B. Parental rights of withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School.

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education. This provision and its limitations must be indicated in the school prospectus.

C. Complaints about the provision of Religious Education.

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Headteacher. There is also provision for complaints to be heard by a Committee of the Governing Board possibly with advice from the Diocese. However, if the complaint is still not satisfactorily resolved, then further 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.