St. John's C. of E.

Blackpool's First Free School 1817

Religious Education Policy

'In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.'
Matthew 7:12

Be Kind Be Forgiving Be a Good Friend Be Honest Love One Another

Be part of our St John's family!

Last updated: July 2024

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Here at St john's our children are at the heart of everything we do, we aim to provide the best for each pupil working within a Christian environment and in partnership with each other, home, church and the community and led by the hand of God. Living by our motto 'Everyone Matters in God's World' and following our golden rule:

Do to others what you would have them do to you. Matthew 7:12

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.

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2019
"In a Church school the pupils and their families can expect a 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."

Intent

The aim of Religious Education at St John's is to enable children to flourish and live well together through a motivating and inspiring curriculum and a range of experiences. We will provide opportunities for the children to develop an understanding of Christianity as a diverse, living and global faith as well as exploring a range of other religions and worldviews. Our Christian Values are at the heart of all we do and our curriculum enables pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We will provide opportunities for pupils to explore and respond to their personal understanding of God as creator, to discover more about themselves and to experience wonder about the world they live in.

love one another just as Jesus loves us. John 15 verse 12

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 helps children 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.

- 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

In our teaching of Religious Education, we contribute heavily to the children's spiritual development. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development in a church school is distinctive because these four aspects of the school curriculum are inextricably rooted in the reality of God the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Religious Education (RE) curriculum in a church school is the place where excellent and distinctive SMSC is seen most clearly.

Spiritual development

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful.
Psalm 139.13-14

Spiritual development within RE in a church school enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment.
This is promoted through:
• exploring their relationship with God and the sense that they are his children, unique and loved by him;
• exploring and experiencing prayer and worship from a variety of Christian traditions;
• giving thanks to God for all aspects of school life;
• discussing and reflecting upon key questions of meaning and truth such as the existence of God, the origins and purpose of the universe, good and evil, life after death;
• considering the value of human beings and their relationship with God, with one another and with the natural world;
• discovering how the creative and expressive arts enable spiritual development;
• opportunities to discuss feelings and emotions openly;
• recognising and encouraging the use of personal and group gifts and talents;
• opportunities to develop their gift of imagination and creativity;
• encouraging curiosity and questioning so that their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues can be developed within a secure environment where faith is valued;
• developing a sense of personal significance and belonging;
• encountering Christian fellowship.
* have time to reflect and think about their own values and believes.

Moral development

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.
Romans 12.2.7

Moral development in RE in a church school is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives. This is promoted through:
• developing a sense of right and wrong based on the teaching of Jesus Christ;
• recognising the values identified within the Bible: truth, justice, trust, love, peace, compassion, forgiveness, reconciliation and redemption;
• learning to follow a path through the conflicting demands of faith, family, peers, society, the media and the world of ideas;
• recognising the importance of personal integrity;
• developing mutual respect across racial and religious divides;

• recognising that people's rights also imply responsibilities;
• developing a sensitive conscience.

Social development

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.
John 13.34-35

Social development in RE in a church school develops pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice.
This is promoted through:
• developing a sense of empathy, compassion and concern for others;
• building relationships within the school and between the school, the parish and the local community;
• considering how Christian beliefs affect decisions at local and national level;
• investigating social issues from the perspective of Christianity and of other faiths, recognising the common ground and diversity that exists between them;
• providing opportunities for pupils to articulate their own views on a range of current issues and to show respect for the opinions of others and a willingness to learn from their insights.

Cultural development

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3.28

Cultural development in RE in a church school 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.
This is promoted through:
• promoting an understanding of Christianity from a global perspective through encounters with people, literature and the creative arts from different cultures;
• exploring the diversity of Christianity worldwide with particular reference to the diversity of the Anglican community;
• considering the relationship between British and European culture and Christianity;
• appreciating the diversity of cultures within Britain.

Taken from The National Society Excellence and Distinctiveness Guidance on RE in Church of England Schools document (2005)

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 and embeds our own core values of honesty, friendship, love, kindness and forgiveness.

Implementation

At St John's we have adopted the Questful RE Syllabus produced by Blackburn Diocese Board of Education. This is supplemented with the Understanding Christianity materials.
Our curriculum is used to teach pupils core Christian concepts and about the range of religions and world views. The sequences of lessons are planned carefully to ensure a developing understanding and to equip pupils with the knowledge and skills they need to ask and answer questions and explore their own religious, spiritual and moral views. Challenging questions encourage children to think deeply and develop their own ideas and viewpoints. Teachers assess Religious Education through the Questful Learning Maps, the unit overviews and the ladder of expectation. Subject and unit specific vocabulary is provided for the children and explored throughout the unit. The unit plans are designed to develop questful pathway of discovery, ultimately 'digging deeper' to make connections between biblical text, theology and the lives of the children. The subject leader monitors assessments, books and teaching through learning walks, pupil voice and work scrutiny. RE is taught for 1 hour per week with an 70% Christianity focus and 30% learning about other faiths. The taught curriculum in other subject areas, daily acts of worship, regular church services and a range of opportunities support the delivery of the RE curriculum to enable pupils to explore God's creation
At its best RE offers pupils authentic encounters with living faith communities equipping them with the ability to hold an informed conversation about religious beliefs and practices.

Assessment, recording, reporting

Assessment 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 using Questful RE syllabus ladder of expectation.

Inclusion

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

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

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.

Impact

Our well-planned Religious Education curriculum ensures children understand core Christian concepts and beliefs and knowledge of other world faiths. The carefully planned daily acts of worship, experiences, church services and learning in a loving Christian environment support the pupils in their spiritual development. The religious literacy the pupils develop helps to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain as well as for living out our Christian and British Values.

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**.

At St John's CE Primary School, we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters may arise. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at our school.

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.