



St. Nicholas C of E Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Our vision

We prepare every pupil for their best future by ensuring they reach their full potential and attain the knowledge, skills and understanding required for success as we believe that 'With God, all things are possible'. Matthew 19:26



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| Date reviewed: | October 2023 |
| Reviewed by: | G. Dalby |
| Approved by Headteacher: | October 2023 |
| Date of next review: | Autumn 2026 |

Rationale

At St Nicholas C of E Primary School management of Religious Education is a distinctive role of the governors and headteacher. RE is provided in accordance with the school's Trust Deed 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 its school. Although Religious Education and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another, they are managed separately. At St Nicholas we have adopted the Blackburn Diocese Board of Education, Questful RE syllabus. This is supplemented with the Understanding Christianity materials.

"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."

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2019

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2019

Aims

The aims of Religious Education in Church Schools are:

- 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.

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2019

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 world views 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

This can be expressed in more detail and distinctively as:

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.

Religious Education in Church Schools should also 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.

Religious Education in Church Schools should help pupils 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.;

Religious Education in Church Schools 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.

Statutory Requirements

The amount of time allocated to RE should be at least 5%. This is the minimum recommended in national guidelines. There will be occasions when RE takes a larger slice of the curriculum, reflecting the Church School's greater commitment to the subject. Out of the curriculum time for RE, Christianity should occupy a minimum of **70%** of the time, up to a maximum of **80%**. Therefore, **20% to 30%** of RE Curriculum time should be devoted to non-Christian faiths. The guidance given in this syllabus leads to an 80/20 split. That as well as Christianity pupils should study aspects of the practices and beliefs of the other five major world faiths (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism). Guidance is given in the syllabus overviews and units as to appropriate content and length of time for this study.

Planning

The subject leader for Religious Education, Mrs G Dalby, has overall responsibility for the development of Religious Education within the curriculum and will work in line with the head teacher and senior leadership team to ensure they follow the responsibilities outlined in the subject leader handbook. The curriculum is currently in line with the 2017 "Questful R.E." Syllabus, produced by Blackburn Diocese and the document "Understanding Christianity." The unit plans are designed to develop a questful pathway of discovery, ultimately 'digging deeper' to make connections between biblical text, theology and the lives of the children. The 'Ladder of Expectation and Achievement' is used to assess RE. The ladder is intended primarily to contribute to planning excellent tasks at the right level appropriate for the pupils' experience, knowledge and ability. 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 and Reporting

The 'Ladder of Expectation and Achievement' is used to make judgements about the level of individual pupils' achievement. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to be achieving at ▲ level (rung 2 of the ladder). At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to be achieving at ✦ level (rung 4 of the ladder).

Key stage 1-2 record pupils attainment on the ladder at the end of each unit on an assessment spreadsheet kept centrally on the school server. EYFS units are recorded on the recording sheet until they begin to attain on the ladder. On each unit sheet there is a list of expected knowledge marked with the symbols from the ladder along with a list of expected outcomes. These expectations have been converted into 'I know' and 'I can' statements that can be used by pupils to self-assess or peer assess. There are no longer two attainment targets in RE but learning about and from religion is still considered to be essential and both have been incorporated in the ladder and expectations. There are no specific assessment tasks as every task, potentially, can be assessed and contribute to the expected achievements.

Cross-Curricular Links

Learning in RE presents opportunities for the reinforcement of knowledge, skills and understanding developed in other curriculum areas. These opportunities can be exploited through:

- aspects of English such as speaking and listening, reading and writing skills
- aspects of PSHCE such as the skills and attributes they need to manage life's challenges and make the most of life's opportunities.
- international or multi-cultural work, for example celebration of festivals, storytelling
- using ICT, for example e-mail with schools abroad, materials from the internet and satellite television;
- geographical and historical work relating to other countries and people of faith.

Christian Values

Here at St Nicholas C of E we feel it is vital that learning opportunities are provided which support and nurture the whole child. The children across the school experience activities which help them to socially interact with others and develop emotional intelligence. Our school curriculum is underpinned by a set of Christian Gospel Values which are delivered over a two year programme, linking strongly with our PSCE curriculum.

British Values

At St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, we take pride in promoting a range of British Values in line with the 2011 Prevent Strategy of:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect

- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs Within Religious Education British values are explored by teaching the children about other World Faiths.

Spiritual, Moral, social and Cultural Development

In our teaching of Religious Education, St Nicholas Church of England Primary School contributes 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.

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

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)

RE also promotes an understanding of cultures and religions other than Christianity. Through the exploration of texts, beliefs, and practices lived out worldwide, pupils will develop respect and understanding. Cultural diversity should be recognised and celebrated as we remove barriers and build communities.

Equality and Diversity

As a school community, St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all those involved within the school community, whether staff, students, visitors, contractors or clients. This commitment is to ensure that people's individual qualities are recognised and celebrated; and that people are treated with dignity and respect. Our school recognises that discrimination, harassment and victimisation may be experienced by some protected characteristics in a number of ways, including day-to-day interaction with colleagues, peers, visitors, pupils and staff. Our school will ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted by recognising and celebrating diversity, continuing our proactive equality strategies and plans and complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and its associated duties. This policy applies to all irrespective of:

- age,
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex, and sexual orientation (Protected characteristics, equality and human rights act 2010)

Inclusion

At our school we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. This matches with the school's curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our teaching of Religious Education we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

Resources

St Nicholas Church of England acknowledges the need to continually maintain, update and develop its resources. Resources for RE are stored centrally and are updated and replaced as necessary.

Right to withdraw

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education 'The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England or Methodist Church Foundation. 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 or Methodist Church 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.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching in RE is the responsibility of subject leader, supported by the Senior Leadership Team. 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 RE in the school.