

St Nicholas C of E Primary School
Religious Education Policy



Review date : March 2023

Our uniquely Christian ethos is an integral part of the character of our school and is reflected in the daily life and work of the whole school.

St Nicholas has a close link with its' local parish church of St. Nicholas and St. Barnabas and on a wider scale, with the local Methodist church and closely with the church school family of the Diocese of Coventry as well as community groups

The role of the church in our school is primarily of support and guidance, firmly rooted in our Christian vision to promote the flourishing of our children in an inclusive Church school ethos and environment The educational vision of the Church of England - "a good education is to promote life, in all its fullness", built around a framework of four elements of: dignity, hope, wisdom, community. RE at St Nicholas ensures children flourish, meeting the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.

Vision

Aim high, be courageous, show love and kindness

“Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love”

(1 Cor 16:13 – 14)

At St Nicholas C of E Primary School, our vision is that every child and member of our school community is welcomed and valued as a unique individual, supported and empowered to flourish by our caring, inclusive and engaging ethos and curriculum:

- to love and value learning, able to make progress and achieve
- to love and care for each other, their neighbours and communities
- to love and value themselves
- to be brave as confident, happy and respectful citizens, developing opinions and values, beliefs and views to grow as independent learners and active citizens in local, national and global communities.
- to develop strength to persevere, to push themselves and aim high.

Values

Within school we aim to engender in children an understanding of faith and spirituality and what these can bring to our lives, should we engage freely. Led by our vision, we underpin all aspects of school with the Christian values of love, forgiveness and reconciliation, respect, peace, justice, hope and thankfulness. We encompass those of courage, trust and service united as a community working together in cooperation for mutual support and growth. We try to embody these values. We have selected a bible reference for each value, to support our staff and children to understand and be inspired to live by these values.

Our values:

- **Love**-1 Col 16:14 "Let all you do be done in love"
- **Justice (Fairness)**- Micah 6:8 "Act justly. Love mercy, walk humbly with your God"
- **Perseverance**- Hebrews 12:1 "...And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."
- **Kindness and Compassion**- Ephesians 4:32 "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you"
- **Forgiveness**- Luke 6:37 "Forgive and you will be forgiven"
- **Hope**- Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him..."
- **Respect**- Matt 7:12? "So in everything do to others what you would have them do to you"
- **Peace and Reconciliation**- John14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."
- **Trust**- Ps 56:3-4 "When I am afraid I put my trust in you."
- **Service**- Gal 5:13 "Serve one another in love"
- **Courage**- Ps21:14 "Be strong and let your heart take courage"
- **Thankfulness**- 1 Thess 16 "Give thanks with a grateful heart"

Inclusion and Ethos

This vision is "hospitable to diversity, freedom of religion and belief", and encourages everyone to contribute "from the depths of their own traditions and understandings."

We believe that within St. Nicholas we are a family where children can question, explore, experience and expand their knowledge and understanding of the complex world we live in. It is an environment where many faiths and world views are explored and celebrated in an ethos of dignity and respect.

We welcome children and families of differing religious beliefs, or those of none and recognise a variety of religious and cultural traditions that reflect the lives of our children and their families. From this foundation our pupils explore and make discoveries during their time at St. Nicholas'. Our children learn to show care, love and respect. They develop the key skills needed including those of self-respect and sensitivity to the needs of others.

Religious Education Syllabus

Religious Education is a compulsory and core subject within the curriculum of the school. As a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Religious Education at St. Nicholas' is firmly rooted in Christianity. We use the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2017 - 2022) and the Understanding Christianity resource, as recommended by The Diocese of Coventry.

Aims

At St. Nicholas' we aim to enable children of all abilities and levels of development to:

1. Develop their knowledge, understanding and awareness of the beliefs and practices of principal world faiths including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

2. Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, including the local community.
3. Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions.
4. Enhance their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
5. Recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within an ethnically and socially diverse society.

Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus covers key concepts and processes as the children:

- Know about and understand a range of religions and world views;
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religion and worldview;
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religion and world view.

Understanding Christianity enables pupils to

- Know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring key theological concepts;
- Develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians;
- Develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves, the world and human existence.

Understanding Christianity incorporates approaches to teaching about Christianity that build upon the children's encounters with biblical concepts. The units of work address a key Christian concept through key questions and exploration of key biblical texts, the impact that they have on Christians and possible implications of the children themselves. The main Christian concepts explored through the Understanding Christianity programme are:

God, Creation/The Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God.

Key Processes

The concepts of Understanding Christianity fit into a spiral curriculum; they are revisited and explored in increasing depth as pupils move through the school. They are explored through key questions and through connections to other concepts.

Through a carefully planned amalgamation of both Understanding Christianity and Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus, the children's process of learning will focus on key questions linked to the areas of:

Believing: Religious beliefs, teaching, sources: questions about meaning, purpose and truth.

Expressing: Religious and spiritual forms of expression; questions about identity and diversity.

Living: Religious practices and ways of living; questions about values and commitments.

Organisation

Class teachers use the resources provided by Understanding Christianity and Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus as a basis for planning relevant, stimulating and creative learning opportunities for their pupils, ensuring that the principles and processes that support quality learning within a unit are not compromised.

Class teachers adapt plans to ensure that lessons meet the learning needs of all pupils including those pupils that require further support and those pupils that demonstrate gifts or talents. Each class weekly discrete RE lessons/ or equivalent in a block of learning, including across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Some classes teach weekly RE lessons, others block the learning for the unit of learning. RE timings meet the requirements as detailed in Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus. In EYFS RE also contributes to a child's personal and social development and their understanding of the world. Additionally, teachers may devise special events or focused RE days/weeks that enrich pupils' experiences and understanding.

Collective Worship is not part of the taught curriculum and is not considered as part of the recommended time for teaching RE.

At St. Nicholas', learning opportunities in RE will include the use of drama, art, poetry, music, design and technology, class and group discussion, as well as exploring different forms of communication and writing to fully engage and motivate all pupils.

Where possible, first-hand learning experiences are planned into units of work through visits to sacred spaces or inviting visitors into school.

Assessing, Reporting and Recording

Teachers will use end of unit learning outcome descriptions from Understanding Christianity and Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus to make 'best fit' judgements on pupils' attainment of knowledge and their application and understanding of the matters, skills and processes specified in the unit.

Pupils will be judged as either:

Working towards, working towards +, expected, exceeding.

Teachers use a variety of informal and formal activities to support their judgements of children's' progress and achievements. These include: discussion, group activities, marking and guiding work, observing, asking and answering questions. We aim to involve children in reflecting on their own progress and achievement wherever possible and also give opportunities for peer assessment and support.

At the end of the summer term the Annual Report includes an indication of a child's attainment in RE throughout the year for pupils in KS1 and KS2.

Monitoring and Evaluation

RE is monitored by the subject leader and other senior leaders, through lesson observations and visits, planning and books trawls, and discussions with children. The subject leader selects a specific monitoring focus. RE is inspected under SIAMS, in accordance with the Education Act.

Resources

Resources to support the teaching about different religions, including artefacts and specific books, are kept in a central store. Within the guidelines of the ICT and eSafety policies, the internet can be used to support children's individual research.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

Religious education is a statutory subject for all pupils as it is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum. In the UK, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education (section 71 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998).

At St. Nicholas' we consider it good practice to talk to parents to ensure that they fully understand the aims and principles of RE to inform their decision. However, as a C of E school with a strong Christian ethos we expect that those families who have chosen to send their children to our school uphold and are respectful of our Christian ethos and values.

RE at St Nics, a framing poem...

*The important thing about RE is it embraces and respects diversity,
It develops understanding,
It explores questions,
It celebrates awe and wonder,
The important thing about RE is it embraces and respects diversity.*