

St John's Church of England Primary School

Religious Education Policy



St John's Church of England Primary School opened September 2012.

Our school mission statement:

Challenging Ourselves and Supporting Others to Succeed and Flourish.

Our school vision:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

The community of St John's champions an engaging curriculum, which encourages reflective and resilient learners. Because of Jesus' love for everyone, we value every child as an individual and support them spiritually, emotionally, and academically.

Our school values:

Living values: Honesty Respect Love Trust Peace

Learning values: Perseverance Ambition Curiosity Team Work Creativity

St John's Church of England Primary School is a community where all are welcome. We listen and take time to understand the past, work consistently with individuals and ensure we provide skills both academically and socially to access the future.

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: March 2021

Date of next review: March 2024

This policy is based on the RE policy from the Board of Education for the Diocese of Canterbury.

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Introduction

At St John's Church of England Primary School, pupils and their families can expect a high quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is challenging, rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the Understanding Christianity resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Using the Kent Agreed Syllabus we learn about other religions and world views, fostering respect for them. Links with our Christian values and vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We 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.

Aims

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, religious education our school aims for all pupils:

- 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 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 gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- 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 explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.

Objectives

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, the following objectives are age appropriate at the end of our pupils' education in school. The expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and that 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.

Teaching and learning

RE has a high profile within our school curriculum and is highly valued as part of our broad and balanced curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects. Quality teaching in RE helps generate respect for different views and interpretations where real dialogue takes place. Learners develop and use a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion and world views as lived by believers. Key cross-curricular skills such as reading, writing, observation, and discussion are practised, although they are not relied upon as a measure of attainment in RE. Termly assessment based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts shows that attainment is good and significant progress is made in developing an understanding of Christianity and a range of other world religions and on other world views as appropriate.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.
- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy*

**Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. ([Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE.](#))*

- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.

- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.
- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

RE offers a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences, understanding that pupils learn best in different ways. Pupils will experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry based style of learning by:

- Listening to the teacher and each other.
- Asking and discussing 'big' questions
- Reading of texts.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Discussion with the teacher and other pupils.
- Pair and group work.
- Using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Visits and visitors.
- Artwork.
- Outdoor learning.
- Time for reflection.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

Policy and practice in religious education reflects whole school policy and encompasses the full range and ability of all pupils. All pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs. A range of teaching and learning strategies to achieve differentiated learning are used including task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping. There is particular concern to ensure that all tasks are challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils whilst extending the most able. A variety of methods for recording are used to enable children of all writing abilities to succeed in RE.

Breadth and balance

Although work on Christianity will dominate the RE curriculum, there will be in-depth work on the major world religions and on other world views as appropriate Teaching will seek to bring

about a deeper knowledge and understanding of religious traditions but also to develop a range of skills such as the ability to empathise and evaluate attitudes, and develop respect for diversity (*Appendix 1*).

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% in key stages 1-4.

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

Equal Opportunities

Religious education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. It seeks to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions will be treated with sensitivity and respect.

Relevance

Teachers will establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching will enable pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives. This will be done through engaging pupils in an enquiry based style of learning and by posing challenging questions to and by pupils.

Cross-curricular links

Religious education supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as Understanding Christianity.
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Kent Agreed Syllabus.
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identifies progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.

Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education. (Statement of Entitlement June 2016 The Church of England Education Office)
<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/media/childrenandschools/re/statementofentitlement.pdf>
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date
- Ensure all teachers are aware of what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Support colleagues and help develop their subject expertise.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy, schemes of work, the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of RE, pupils' progress and standards.
- Liaise periodically with the HT and Governors.
- Seek opportunities for professional development for themselves and other staff.
- Order resources.
- Monitor end of term assessments.
- Observe the teaching of RE in school, providing support and guidance for teachers.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

Resources

Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Where possible, funding will also allow visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be stored in the ground floor stock room, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

Legal Requirements

At St John's Church of England Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that from the time of the 1944 Education Act, parents have had the right to withdraw their children from religious education. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the headteacher before making this decision. Alternative arrangements will be made for the child while they are out of the classroom during RE time.

Managing the right of withdrawal

The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents. The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 18 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.

Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, that school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on

school premises. Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient. If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE. Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

Appendix 1



Kent Agreed Syllabus incorporating Understanding Christianity

Amended January 2018

Black = Understanding Christianity units

Red = RE Today units of work

Blue = Diocesan units of work

Green = other

	AUTUMN		SPRING		SUMMER	
Reception	CREATION Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?	INCARNATION Why do Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas?	Which stories are special and why? (New Testament)	SALVATION Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?	Which stories are special and why? (Old Testament)	Which stories are special and why? (world faiths) with support from RE Today unit
Year 1	GOD What do Christians believe that God is like?	INCARNATION Why does Christmas matter to Christians? <i>CORE LEARNING</i>	GOSPEL What is the good news that Jesus brings? <i>CORE LEARNING</i>	SALVATION Why does Easter matter to Christians? <i>CORE LEARNING</i>	JUDAISM Who is Jewish and what do they believe?	JUDAISM Who is Jewish and what do they believe?
Year 2	CREATION Who made the world?	INCARNATION Why does Christmas matter to Christians? <i>DIGGING DEEPER</i>	GOSPEL What is the good news that Jesus brings? <i>DIGGING DEEPER</i>	SALVATION Why does Easter matter to Christians? <i>DIGGING DEEPER</i>	ISLAM Who is a Muslim and what do they believe?	ISLAM Who is a Muslim and what do they believe? OR SCHOOL DESIGNED UNIT: A FAITH FOUND WITHIN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY
Year 3	PEOPLE OF GOD What is it like to follow God?	SIKHISM What is important for Sikh people? CHRISTMAS theme 2 lessons	INCARNATION What is the Trinity? <i>CORE LEARNING</i>	SALVATION Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'? <i>CORE LEARNING</i>	KINGDOM OF GOD When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?	SIKHISM How do Sikh people worship and celebrate?

Year 4	CREATION What do Christians learn from the Creation story?	INCARNATION What is the Trinity? <i>DIGGING DEEPER</i>	GOSPEL What kind of a world did Jesus want?	SALVATION Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'? <i>DIGGING DEEPER</i>	HINDUISM What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today?	Why do some people think that life is a journey and what significant experiences mark this? <i>See updated plan</i>
Year 5	GOD What does it mean if God is loving and holy?	INCARNATION Was Jesus the Messiah? <i>CORE LEARNING</i>	PEOPLE OF GOD How can following God bring freedom and justice?	SALVATION What did Jesus do to save human beings?	JUDAISM What does it mean to be Jewish in Britain today?	ISLAM What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? (Part 1) <i>See separate guidance*</i>
Year 6	CREATION Creation and science: conflicting or complementary? in the wider context of 'Big Questions'	GOSPEL What would Jesus do? CHRISTMAS theme <i>2 lessons</i>	ISLAM What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? (Part 2) <i>See separate guidance*</i>	SALVATION What difference does the resurrection make for Christians?	Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?	KINGDOM OF GOD What kind of king is Jesus?

**Amended guidance for years 5 and 6*

The RE today unit; *'Is it better to express your beliefs in arts and architecture or in charity and generosity?'* relies heavily on the children having a deep understanding of the Muslim faith and the Mosque. Therefore this unit must come after both Islam units in the overview. Please see Muslim planning guidance document for support in how to split this unit across two year groups.