

St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School

Religious Education Policy

January 2022 (to be reviewed January 2024)

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the Head Teacher, RE subject leader and teaching staff. It was approved by governors in November 2019 and will be reviewed at least every

three years. At St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School, we fully embrace the school's vision and aims. RE is an academic, non-confessional subject where we seek to ensure that pupils are able to meet the aims and purposes of the Diocesan Syllabus and Statement of Entitlement throughout their time at our school.

Our School Vision

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16.

Our school vision has this Bible passage deeply rooted within. Children in our school will value everyone as unique individuals and celebrate the distinctive and diverse nature of our community and the wider world. They will aspire to greater heights and continue to flourish beyond our school community. They will use the powerful knowledge they have gained to grow into valuable citizens whilst demonstrating resilience, determination, adaptability and being shining lights to others. Our school is laying the foundations for pupils to flourish and ‘live life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10).

Our Aims focus on LIGHT as we,
“Live, love and learn together in the light of Christ”
and link with the Church of England's national vision for ‘Education for life in all its fullness’.
We demonstrate this through:

Love of all

Ignite the light of Christ around all our children

God at the centre of everything we do

Happiness

Truth

Introduction

At St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School, pupils and their families can expect a high quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We teach according to the *Diocese of York and Leeds RE Syllabus*. 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 pupils' own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Links with our school 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. This policy has been written taking into account the latest Statement for Entitlement guidance (2019) and the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule (2018).

Intent

Religious Education is provided in the school within the framework of the York Diocesan Agreed Syllabus. Please click [here](#) for the Church of England's National Statement of Entitlement (February 2019) which gives additional information for parents/carers regarding the entitlement, curriculum statement, curriculum balance and time, staff expertise and knowledge, and support.

"Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together."

Our RE curriculum links closely with our school vision and aims and is laying the foundations for pupils to flourish and 'live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

The aims and objectives of R.E. in a church school (according to the Church of England) are:

- To enable 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 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.

"In all Church schools religious education must be considered an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. Pupils are entitled to a balanced RE curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and the social sciences. It should be a coherent curriculum that enables progress through ordered and sequential learning developing both knowledge and skills. There should be a clear curriculum vision and intent, a structure for implementation and provision and a process for evaluating impact."

At St Francis of Assisi Primary school, RE:

- is a core curriculum subject
- is a non-confessional, academic subject which reflects the diverse community in which our school is based
- is an ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum poised between: human and social sciences, philosophy and theological aspects of Religious Education
- is an integral part of all areas of the curriculum, linking SMSC, core Christian Values and fundamental British Values.
- supports pupils in developing their understanding and their ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs.
- is innovative and imaginative
- allows children to gain knowledge of different world views and religions
- is structured for progression, and to allow enquiry based learning
- encourages the development of free thinking, and compassionately aware adults

In RE, we contribute to the school vision by:

- igniting pupils with a passion for learning and a curiosity to foster life-long learning which will continue beyond our school
- enabling pupils to develop their confidence, be determined, persevere and show resilience

- creating opportunities for pupils to develop wisdom, knowledge and skills which they can demonstrate across local and global communities. This links to pupils' cultural capital to succeed in life and the Church of England's character education
- encouraging children to show dignity and respect towards the beliefs of others and the environment
- having the Christian Values at the heart of our learning
- involving parents/carers in learning

A high-quality sequential religious education (RE) programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews; fostering respect for others. In voluntary aided schools, RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed: this document will help schools interpret that legal requirement.

In all Church schools, religious education must be considered an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. Pupils are entitled to a balanced RE curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and the social sciences. It should be a coherent curriculum that enables progress through ordered and sequential learning developing both knowledge and skills. There should be a clear curriculum vision and intent, a structure for implementation and provision and a process for evaluating impact.

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects. 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.

Curriculum Implementation

Our curriculum is implemented in line with our intent. Year groups and teams work together to create an exciting and purposeful curriculum through the learning opportunities for our pupils.

At St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School, Religious Education is taught in a thematic way with every opportunity used to relate the messages from the Bible to the everyday lives of the children. It is an integral part of all areas of the curriculum, linking SMSC, core Christian Values and fundamental British Values. Children learn about other faiths and are given opportunities throughout the curriculum to raise questions about faith and the various religions of the world. They have the opportunity to visit various places of worship, to experience different religions and cultures through visitors from the local community, and are involved on many occasions in worship with St Francis of Assisi Parish Church. Philosophy, theology and human/social science are all incorporated into the planning.

The school follows the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement and the Diocesan Syllabus' guidance for 'Requirements and Good Practice' and 'Context and Content' for Religious Education (see our curriculum information at the end of this document).

It is supported and shaped by the Diocese of York and Leeds Agreed Syllabus and Understanding Christianity documentation. Lessons are planned in an ordered way including both the systematic learning of specific faiths and world beliefs and Thematic learning exploring some of the 'Big Questions' in life. Every opportunity is used to relate the messages from the Bible to the everyday lives of the children.

Christianity and other world views are studied as living and diverse faiths with an appreciation of differing denominations and global differences. The curriculum is structured to allow opportunities to revisit learning and deepen understanding and thinking over time. Children learn about other faiths and are given opportunities throughout the curriculum to raise questions about faith and the various religions of the world.

The syllabus is underpinned by three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs. These elements are: Making sense of beliefs, Making connections, Understanding the impact.

Series' of lessons include:

- living practices of beliefs
- diversity of belief, practice and world views
- impact of faith on individuals, community and society
- beliefs and where they come from
- application of beliefs in different contexts
- morality and ethics
- study of beliefs
- engaging with sacred texts from a variety of religions
- opportunities for creativity and spirited arts

Curriculum balance and time

Christianity is the majority religion studied in each year group and at least 50% of curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, is committed to the delivery of RE. This is around 10% of teaching time each week. RE teaching is totally separate from requirements for collective worship.

Teaching and Learning

Religious Education is planned throughout the school using the Diocese of York and Leeds RE Syllabus Guidelines. A detailed scheme of work is available on the school website.

Themes are:

EYFS themes emerging from the EYFS Framework

KS1 - Christianity and Islam

Lower KS2 - Christianity and Sikhism

Upper KS2 - Christianity and Judaism

There is a clear overview of the areas taught each year. Each class teacher takes into account the differences in depth of spiritual understanding, religious knowledge and ability of their pupils. We cater for each child's needs through careful planning and assessment. Differentiation is evident through content, outcome, task and response.

The resource 'Understanding Christianity: Text Impact Connections' is used to support the key ideas and crucial inner meaning within the teaching and learning of Christianity. There are a range of resources saved in the staff shared area for staff to use as well as the Big Frieze which depicts an illustration of the eight core concepts at the heart of Christianity. For more information regarding the aims and purpose of Understanding Christianity, please contact the school.

We recognise the importance of teaching RE in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Researching information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
- Engaging in pair and group work.
- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Experiencing visits and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- Taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek 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. Questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect. Teaching enables 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.

Inclusion, Equal Opportunities and Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

All children regardless of ability, ethnicity or gender, will be given equal opportunity to access all aspects of the Religious Education curriculum. Any child experiencing difficulty in accessing parts of the curriculum, will be supported with time, materials and equipment to access the activity at their own level where this is practically possible. Provision is made for children with SEND by providing a variety of relevant materials and opportunities for work to be differentiated by outcome.

Our whole school policy regarding pupils with special needs and differentiation, applies to RE. Teachers are alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their general educational ability.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

For Religious Education to contribute to the spiritual development of pupils at St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School, we aim, as a staff, to celebrate all that is positive about the school, church, community and the environment. We give pupils the opportunity to explore what is meaningful, to ensure that experiences are relevant to the age, aptitude and background of the children, to welcome appropriate responses and to provide a safe and caring environment where children can flourish and develop into responsible human beings.

Cross-Curricular Links

Cross curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning. 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, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship. Religious Education is used as a link that gives scope for development, in addition to being taught as an individual subject within the curriculum. When cross-curricular links are used, RE objectives are explicit. RE is a springboard that can present meaningful ideas and concepts as a starting point for many areas of the curriculum. The school also has themed days or weeks to enhance and extend Religious Education.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Children are encouraged to take an active role in the learning process. As with every curriculum area, they will be encouraged to take part in class discussions, listen to the views of others and give opinions when appropriate. Opportunities for creativity, spirituality and reflection are built into sessions to allow children to explore their own ideas of faith and religion.

Visits and visitors

We are able to visit places of worship in the immediate vicinity of our local community where faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in the teaching of RE. We aim to use this valuable resource for all classes. All pupils have the opportunity to visit a place of worship and participate in the visit of a representative to their RE class. Children will have the opportunity to make a range of visits during their time at our school.

Curriculum Impact

Appropriate to their 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 non-religious worldviews 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.

Pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs.

The Role of the Subject Leader in Religious Education (in liaison with the Head Teacher and Leadership Team including Governors)

Policy and Knowledge Development:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#).
- Decide which religions are to be included at which key stage
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Ensure all teachers know 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.
- Ensure that the whole school plan and schemes of work cater for progression and are in line with the Diocesan Syllabus Guidelines
- Ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education
- Devise appropriate procedures for planning, assessment, recording and reporting pupils' work in line with whole school policy
- Ensure all school policies are promoted in RE
- Promote RE and displays of pupils' work in RE
- Audit available resources, buy new ones and deploy appropriately
- Keep up-to-date with local and national developments.

Monitoring

- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Identify trends, make comparisons and know about different groups
- Monitor planning, checking for clarity of outcomes and aspects of differentiation
- Provide observation feedback and report on findings
- Sample pupil's work
- Evaluate outcomes for pupils in RE for progress and attainment
- Prepare statements about RE for parents and governors, as required
- Ensure parents and children are involved in the process.

Supporting and Advising

- Prepare a subject action plan, including short and long term targets which builds on existing practice and strives for continuous improvement;
- Lead curriculum development and ensure staff development through courses, in-school meetings and training
- Keep up-to-date with new developments and resources
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.

- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.
- Liaise with the Diocesan School Improvement Advisor
- Work alongside colleagues to demonstrate good practice

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in religious education:

- Involves identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as Understanding Christianity.
- Is directly related to the expectations of the Diocese of York and Leeds RE syllabus.
- Seeks to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognises the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employs well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Includes pupil self-assessment.
- Enables effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enables effective reporting to parents.

Assessment outcomes are stated for end of Early Years, Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2 and have been produced through the Diocesan Syllabus. Learning outcomes are clearly stated on year group planning for the three core elements and are reflected in the marking of work and AfL (Assessment for Learning) comments on planning to inform future planning. In addition, the school has an electronic assessment system to record whether pupils are Emerging, Developing, Secure or working at Greater Depth at each year group in line with the topics covered and the assessment outcomes.

Parents are informed of their child's progress in Religious Education through written reports and are also given the opportunity to discuss this curriculum area during parent consultations. The school has a SIAMS inspection every five years and this makes a judgement on RE within the school inspection and report.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next three years, and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that our RE policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to share a copy of the planning for RE with the subject leader each term. The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We maintain a 'self-evaluation' of our RE work in preparation for any scrutiny.

Self-Evaluation

The subject leader for RE and Head Teacher will assess and review the subject's strengths and areas for development. This will be in line with SIAMS and OFSTED guidance about self-evaluation and review.

Staff training and CPD

All staff have access to RE CPD in line with the subject leader's identified areas for development. This is either 'in house' or through diocesan support. The RE subject leader also attends local network meetings.

Legal Requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (*DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory*

Guidance 2010 page 28). The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE. 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 importance placed on RE as a core subject in a church school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff. Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher, any questions from parents about withdrawals. We that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the head teacher before making this decision. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

Date of validation..... Signed..... Chair of Governors

Date of review..... Signed..... Chair of Governors