

**Brinscall St John's C.E./
Methodist Primary School**



Religious Education Policy

Date of policy: Autumn 2024

Date approved by Governing Body: Autumn 2024

Review date: Autumn 2026

Mission Statement:

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the religious education taught at St. John's in support of our Mission Statement to Shine with the Light of Jesus.

Shine with the light of Jesus – Matthew 5:14-16. You are the light of the world.

Within our school family, everyone is valued and encouraged to flourish. We encourage everyone to let their light shine in all aspects of their life, following the example of Jesus Christ.

We hope for each member of our school family to understand how much they are loved by Jesus, so we can each flourish, and shine His light out into the world around us by the way that we live.

Intent

We are a Church of England and Methodist school and we are committed to the Christian Faith, recognising and valuing the Anglican and Methodist traditions. The Religious Education in our school is in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England and Methodist Church as laid down in the Trust Deed. The management of Religious Education is a distinctive role of the governors and Headteacher, through the work of the subject leader.

Through our RE curriculum we aim:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith that influences the lives of people so that they **shine the light of Jesus Christ**.
- To explore core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To enable pupils 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 explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking so that they will want to make a difference in the local and wider communities, contributing to a healthy mind.
- To encourage children to dive deeper in their thinking in order to develop an enquiring mind, not being afraid to ask big questions and be investigative.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To encourage children to be creative in their thinking, making links between religion and their own lives,
- 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 use a religious vocabulary to help children express their understanding.

Implementation

In our school, RE lies at the heart of the curriculum and is an important part in providing opportunities to enable our children to experience life in all its fullness through a curriculum which is rich in opportunities to enable children to 'Shine with the light of Jesus'.

- We follow Blackburn Diocese Agreed Syllabus starting in EYFS, focusing on Christianity as a worldwide faith and also exploring Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism – 'Questful RE'.
- RE is taught weekly for at least an hour and links are made with other subjects where possible.

- Links are made to the Big Story of Christianity.
- Big questions are posed and children are encouraged to ask big questions in order to develop their thinking and make links. Each classroom has a working wall to reflect the 'Questful' journey of each topic.
- A variety of tasks are used to help children develop their understanding and be creative.
- We encourage children to explore the world around them and the impact faith has on it through links to current events, famous people in history and other cultures and faiths.
- Vocabulary specific to each unit is explicitly taught.

Each class devotes at least one hour of curriculum time to RE each week. Throughout the year, Christianity is studied **for 70% of the RE curriculum time, leaving 30% of time** to focus on other faiths (Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism). Where possible, cross curricular links are made and spiritual concepts are explored through other subjects.

Children may visit both Anglican and Methodist churches within the parishes and Methodist circuit. The school also fosters links with other faith groups through correspondence and visits.

Much of the teaching in RE is linked together through the Big Story of Christianity.

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, Creation, the Fall and People of God)**
- God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us; **(Incarnation and Gospel)**
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason. **(Gospel, Salvation and the Kingdom of God)**

Children will be encouraged to focus on the IMPACT of faith on people's lives through:

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith, or other world faiths, 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.

Christianity will also be explored as a worldwide faith through the use of photographs, visitors to school, links with overseas projects and resources.

Impact

Religious Education at our school is creative, 'Questful' and encourages children to be critical thinkers.

Our pupils will have:

- knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, Christianity, other principal world religions, other religious traditions and world views;
- understanding and respect for different religions, beliefs, values and traditions (including ethical life choices), through exploring issues within and between faiths;
- understanding of the influence of faith and belief on individuals, societies, communities and cultures;

- skills of enquiry and response through the use of religious vocabulary, questioning and empathy;
- skills of reflection, expression, application, analysis and evaluation of beliefs, values and practices, and the communication of personal responses to these.

Religious Education enables:

- pupils 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 all 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.

Through the teaching of Religious Education, there is a significant contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development.

World Faiths

It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world that children should be encouraged to foster a respect for the followers of the other world faiths. It is essential that this respect is based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of those faiths.

Therefore, RE should help children:

- 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.

The contribution of RE to Christian and British values

We are proud of our Christian foundations and recognise that our school, and the relationships we have, are distinctive because of this. We promote the values and beliefs of the Christian faith, whilst respecting the beliefs and cultures of others. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promote a range of Gospel Values alongside British Values through the experience we offer to all our pupils. Daily worship and Gospel Values help us to fulfil our vision and mission statement 'Shine with the light of Jesus'.

Exploring these values encourages children 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 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; developing the whole child – intellectual, social, spiritual, moral, physical and emotional.
- Understand that we are all part of God's family, we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of all children, identifying, recognising and seeking to develop in each their own particular skills, abilities and talents.
- 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.
- Explore ways in which they can shine the light of Jesus in their own lives
- develop a personal relationship with God through Jesus; to know they are loved by Jesus, that they are a child of God, and wonder at His world.

Planning

Planning is taken from the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education syllabus. Staff are encouraged to use and adapt the different units for KS1 and KS2 to provide creative and memorable RE lessons in which children are fully engaged. We engage in Questful RE in which children are encouraged to explore big questions and link them to the core Christian and British values. Staff are also encouraged to teach RE across the curriculum in other subject areas as appropriate. For each unit, children need to **explore the text** (stories from the Bible or other religious texts), **discover the impact, make the connection** and then **dive deeper**.

The planned topic matrix ensures the development of concepts and understanding, avoiding undue repetition. Pupils of differing ability levels, including pupils with SEN are catered for through differentiated tasks, support and outcomes. Each classroom has an RE working wall and a worship area.

Resources

R.E. resources linking to a particular year group's topic are kept in that classroom; in each class there are also sets of Bibles. In addition to this, we have a wide selection of books in the library and in class reading corners to support the teaching of RE and access to a range of online resources.

Recording, assessment and reporting

- Planning is regularly monitored by the RE co-ordinator and/or Headteacher.
- Tasks within the units provide a suitable level of challenge for each year group. Children who are deemed to be working above or below these expectations are identified.
- Big questions are posed and children are encouraged to ask big questions in order to develop their thinking and make links.

- A variety of tasks are used to help children develop their understanding and be creative.
- Children have individual RE books in which to record individual work.
- Achievement and effort in RE is reported annually to parents in the school report.
- Work is regularly monitored by the RE co-ordinator.

Equal Opportunities and SEN

Activities should be carefully planned by the class teacher and be differentiated, where appropriate, for children with SEN and equally pupils identified as more able or gifted and talented. Please refer to appropriate policy for more information. At St John's we have due regard for our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Through the delivery of the RE curriculum, we will ensure that we eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

The role of the co-ordinator

The RE co-ordinator will ensure:

- Resources are purchased and distributed to aid the delivery of RE.
- Staff are supported in their delivery of the scheme of work.
- The needs of SEN children are met within RE.
- More able children have opportunities for enrichment and development.
- The quality of teaching RE is high throughout the school through scrutiny of planning and work, delivery of staff meetings, attendance at cluster meetings.

The co-ordinator will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy through:

- Lesson observations
- Planning and book scrutiny
- Sample of children's work in portfolios
- Discussion with children and staff

Role of the Head teacher

The role of the Head teacher is to:

- monitor the implementation of this policy alongside the RE subject co-ordinator
- monitor the teaching and learning of pupils with the RE subject co-ordinator
- reflect on subject development plans and annual subject profile
- arrange to keep the governing body informed about the changes to this policy.

The policy will be shared with all teaching staff and Governors.

Statutory Requirements:

'...all state schools...must teach Religious Education to pupils at every Key Stage.'

The National Curriculum in England: Framework document 2013, p4

RE is a subject covered within the school curriculum and is distinct from collective worship which is not counted as curriculum time.

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. Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education. This provision and its limitations are indicated in the school brochure.

The Worship and Religious Education provided by our 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.