



## Religious Education Policy

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<b>Approved by:</b>	<b>SHINE</b>	<b>On:</b>	<b>November 2022</b>
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## **The Intent of RE at Christ Church CE Primary**

Our promise at Christ Church is to make every child feel successful, happy, included, nurtured and enriched. RE at Christ Church CE Primary will be provided in line with the legal requirements. These are that:

- the basic curriculum will include provision for religious education for all pupils on the school roll;
- the content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain;
- The RE which is provided shall be in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for Sandwell, including use of the Understanding Christianity Framework to support the teaching of Christianity.

Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, our aims in RE are for pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in the United Kingdom to ensure children feel included;
- develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, from the local to the global;
- develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in the United Kingdom;
- enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by: developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings and other beliefs can relate to them; -responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience; -reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs, including those with no faith.

Following the Sandwell Syllabus, we believe the principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim. The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils can:



1. Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:
  - identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary
  - explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities
  - recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation
  
2. Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:
  - examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways
  - recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world
  - appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
  
3. Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:
  - evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
  - challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response
  - discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

Throughout schooling, teachers should consider how their teaching contributes towards the principal aim of RE, and how they help pupils to achieve the threefold aims above.

## **Context**

Christ Church CE Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The Governors in consultation with the Head teacher have decided, following advice from the diocese, have decided to adopt the Sandwell Locally Agreed Syllabus (RE: LEARNING AND LIVING) and supplement this with material from the Diocese and elsewhere including The Understanding Christianity framework.



## **Responsibilities for RE within the school, (Head teachers and Governors)**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- where appropriate, pupils have opportunities to take courses leading to an accredited qualification in the subject
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the head teacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to RE. In these circumstances, head teachers might wish to seek advice from their LA or SACRE.

The context of RE at Christ Church CE Primary is that of an average urban Church of England primary school, serving children in the age range of two to eleven years old. We currently work to the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus alongside the Understanding Christianity scheme of work. We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome the diversity and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child so that every child feels included. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities in RE and in general. We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas.

## **The Implementation of RE at Christ Church CE Primary**

### **Time Allocation**

Schools have a statutory responsibility to deliver Religious Education to all pupils, except those withdrawn by parents. Schools must ensure that sufficient time is given in order to enable pupils to meet the expectations set out in this agreed syllabus, ensuring that the curriculum is coherent and shows progression,



particularly across transitions between key stages. RE is taught a clearly identifiable time in each of class timetables. This is more flexible in EYFS.

The National Framework for RE (DFES 2004) recognises RE as a 'core' subject, required for all pupils. The Dearing Review of the Curriculum (1996) recommended a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE in EYFS and at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two, a recommendation endorsed by the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus. The time allocated at Christ Church CE Primary will be one hour per week in both Key Stages with the addition of daily acts of worship, focus days and the whole school celebrations of core Christian and multi-faith festivals. RE will form part of the planning in the EYFS; although there is no specific time allocation it is expected that there will be approximately 50 minutes per week of teacher input or short sessions that are implemented through continuous provision or linked to other curriculum areas such as English and Maths. The RE curriculum time does not include assembly or collective worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work.

### **Scheme of Work**

A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers and other interested people alongside this policy. It has been written in the light of the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus and the Birmingham Diocese who recommended the trial of the Understanding Christianity. This agreed syllabus requires that all pupils developing understanding of Christianity in each key stage. In addition, across the ages range, pupils will develop understanding of the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhi, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study in thematic units. RE is based around half-termly themes or cross curricular units in

### **In Focus Provision our children :**

- Engage in activities to develop skills linked to personal targets.
- Engage in sensory based activities to enable the children to develop awareness of themselves.

Benefit from an RE curriculum that suits the needs of our pupils by, for example: choosing content that suits the learners; selecting aspects that connect with the lives and experiences of learners with special needs, appropriate to their abilities and understanding; ensuring sensory learning strategies are implemented rather than discussion or written tasks.

The children choose a religious song to sing daily from a song board.

### **In EYFS children will have the opportunity to:**

- Encounter religions and worldviews through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship.
- Listen to and talk about stories.



- Notice differences between people (0-3)
- Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways. (Rec)
- Understand that some places are special to members of their community. (Rec)
- Recognise that people have different beliefs and celebrate special times in different ways. (Rec)
- Investigate similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class. (Rec)

Key Stage One, where Christianity, Islam and Sikhism will be the major religions studied. At Key Stage Two pupils will learn about Christianity throughout the key stage, and will also have major learning opportunities with regard to other religions; Judaism and Buddhism in years 3 and 4, and Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism in years 5 and 6. No teacher can be an instant expert in six religions. Staff who feel the need to build up their own subject knowledge can use the subject knowledge section of their RE file to support and attend the briefing sessions to increase their knowledge as well as using and sharing staff expertise. CPD is

### **Teaching and Learning Styles**

High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning using the locally agreed syllabus, and seeking diocesan advice, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content. In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection. We use a variety of approaches of helping pupils to appreciate, and to begin to develop critical thinking about, religious life and teachings, including enquiry based and philosophical approaches.

The new emphases of the Sandwell Syllabus 2018 include:

- Coherent understanding: There is an increased emphasis on helping pupils to develop a coherent understanding of several religions, by studying one religion at a time (systematic study) before bringing together and comparing different traditions (thematic study). The thematic study allows pupils to draw together their learning each year. This is a knowledge based approach to RE learning.
- Core concepts: Clarity about identifiable core concepts of religions and beliefs helps teachers and pupils to understand how beliefs and practices connect, so



that pupils are able to build effectively on prior learning as they progress through the school.

- Teaching and learning approach: There is a clear teaching and learning approach at the heart of the 2018 syllabus, whereby all units enable pupils to 'make sense' of the religions and beliefs studied, 'understand the impact' of these beliefs in people's lives, and to 'make connections' in their learning and their wider experience of the world. The three-fold aim implies an active and connected pedagogy.
- Assessment: Flexible assessment opportunities are given, based on end-of-phase outcomes, linked to the teaching and learning approach and the knowledge specified in the units of study. Each unit has specific outcomes that help pupils to work towards and achieve the end-of-phase outcomes.
- Breadth and balance: Inspection under the current framework emphasizes a broad and balanced curriculum. This syllabus provides for good connections between RE and other subjects and enables RE to take its place alongside other subjects of the curriculum in holistic learning for pupils.
- Understanding Christianity: The 2016 resource from RE Today is being used in many schools in the local authority area, and is open to all. This syllabus incorporates the Understanding Christianity approach, so that schools who are using that resource can be confident that they are meeting the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Details: <http://www.understandingchristianity.org.uk/>
- Literacy and writing across the curriculum: This syllabus provides numerous focused opportunities for pupils to write well, developing their literacy skills through RE. Teachers should use purposeful and challenging writing strategies, along with speaking, listening, creativity and other approaches, in RE to contribute to building pupils' general skills.

OFSTED reports suggest that the range of teaching and learning strategies in use in RE is often too narrow, in the overuse of stories and a limited range of drawing and written tasks. Our policy is to aim to ensure the use in RE of art, drama, thinking skills, speaking and listening activities, visits, posters, photographs, videos, ICT use, display work and other active learning strategies. Cross curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning. We recognise the importance of teaching to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus in a balanced way.

## **Resources**

Resources are stored in the small hall, and should be returned after use. The school has invested in new books, persona dolls, religious artefacts, video, picture packs and posters, and staff may need to familiarize themselves with the new materials. We maintain an RE story shelf in the resource cupboard, which offers many stories from different traditions. Teachers may choose to use these in RE.



Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending as part of the RE monitoring cycle.

### **Visits to places of worship**

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to be enriched and encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities. We are able to visit Christ Church in the immediate vicinity of the school, where faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in RE. We shall aim to use this valuable resource for all classes as each class visits the church at least once a year to link with their current learning. Children will have the opportunity to make the following visits during their time at Christ Church CE Primary School. Year 1 – Christ Church (At least twice a year), Year 2 – Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick, Year 3 – Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick, Year 4 – Masjid Usman Mosque in Smethwick, Year 5 – Birmingham Progressive Synagogue and Year 6 – Masjid Usman Mosque in Smethwick. We regularly visit Christ Church throughout the year. Each year group has a planned learning experience at the Church and the Reverend helps support in the teaching of lesson at our school when requested. The RE subject leader will support you to organize these educational visits.

### **Matching Work to Pupils' Needs**

The whole school policy with regard to special needs and differentiation applies to RE. Teachers should be 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'.

### **Good assessment practice**

In RE, by the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant program of study, as in all other subjects of the curriculum. The expectation is that pupils' achievements will be weighed up by teachers using criteria arising from the programs of study.

We report on pupils' progress and attainment in RE to parents, as required by law. We use the Chris Quigley Milestone objectives and Sandwell Syllabus aims which provide three key objectives: to make sense of belief, to understand the impact of belief and to make connections and reflect. Under each umbrella pupils are:

- taught an increasing knowledge and understanding of religions and world views, making sense of beliefs.



- They should learn to express and communicate ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views, understanding the impacts of religion.
- They should gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and world views, making connections of their own.

We use unit assessment sheets (implemented September 2020), where the class teacher assesses a child's attainment at the end of each unit against the learning outcomes. The child is either graded as working towards the expected outcome, working at the expected outcome or working at greater depth. Currently in progress is a folder of examples of pupils' work, which is designed to help teachers make judgments about attainment and progress, towards the expected standard. This is to help ensure judgements are accurate and consistent amongst classes and year groups. It is available on the school network and a physical copy in the RE lead's cupboard. The RE subject lead adds examples of pupils' work that provide clear evidence of achievement. This approach to exemplifying standards aims to clarify our understanding of what makes for quality in learning about religions and learning from religions.

As stated in the Agreed Syllabus, a formal assessment of each pupil is neither required nor desirable for every RE unit. Continuing use of assessment for learning methods is best. Each exemplified unit of work suggests assessment tasks that can be built into each unit of work. Teachers can assess the work by setting a learning task towards the end of the unit. The tasks aim to elicit engaged and reflective responses to the material studied throughout the unit across the ability range.

We make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's progress in RE in annual reports, based on regular monitoring of work with regard to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us.

### **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 the 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 upload their RE planning every week so it can be monitored termly alongside a book look, planning look, RE pop in or pupil conference. The coordinator's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We maintain a 'self-evaluation' of our RE work in readiness for inspection alongside an yearly action plan which is RAG rated termly.



## **Self Evaluation, RE and Inspection**

The subject leader will maintain an active awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, in line with OFSTED guidance about self evaluation and review.

## **Transition to Secondary Education**

We use the transition unit provided by the Agreed Syllabus, and provide the schools our pupils move on to with a simple statement of the religions and topics they have been studying as part of their transition information.

## **Withdrawal**

We note the right of parents to withdraw their children from RE and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff. Please refer to the coordinator or head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. At the time of writing, there are no pupils withdrawn.

## **Impact**

We assess the impact of our curriculum in terms of providing a successful, happy, inclusive, nurturing and enriched education for our pupils in line with our aims. We aspire for children to be secondary ready and to have made good progress academically from their relative starting points – demonstrated through external testing, learning talks and regular proof of progress tasks. Importantly though, we also look at how well our children have developed in other ways, teachers assess pupils' social and emotional journeys; our pupils regularly reflect on their own and their peers' experiences; and we monitor their learning behaviour and development. We look at attainment alongside attendance, pupil attitudes, experiences, enjoyment and children's impact on the wider world as responsible future citizens.

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE subject leader and teaching staff.

