

Westhead Lathom St James'

CE Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Last Reviewed Date: Autumn 2023

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Version	Date	Author/Editor	Revision Notes
V 1.0	April 2015	Alison Albion	Policy rewritten in light of changes to the setting and curriculum. Documents copied into new format, with header, footer and version control.
V 2.0	May 2017	Alison Albion	Updated resources
V3.0	September 2018	Alison Albion	Up-dated following WLSS Cluster liaison
V4.0	Autumn 2019	Helen Clark	New vision and values added. Updated schemes of work used in the planning of Religious Education.
V5.0	Autumn 2020	Helen Clark	No changes required
V6.0	Autumn 2021	Helen Clark	Resource List Updated
V7.0	Autumn 2022	Michelle Smyth	Updated sections
V8.0	Autumn 2023	Michelle Smyth	Updated Questful RE

Vision Statement: Our Vision for the Future

'A curriculum that is challenging, inspiring and engaging; in which all pupils flourish spiritually, creatively and academically to become confident young people.'

'With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or imagine.'

Ephesians 3:20 New Century Version (NCV)

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE. It begins by stating: 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 to educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together. Quoting from the Church of England's Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, it continues Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.

Introduction

As a Church of England school we believe religion underpins all aspects of the curriculum. Our aim is to build our school and curriculum on Christian principles and practices; promoting, moral and social responsibility, a concern for the environment and a respect for other faiths and cultures. A fundamental part of that is delivery of high quality, explicit RE teaching reflecting the school's distinctive Christian character. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religion as well as about religion. Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people.

Planning and Teaching

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Locally Agreed Lancashire Syllabus supported by resources from the new edition of Questful RE (Blackburn Syllabus) and Understanding Christianity. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school. We also use an external resource known as Understanding Christianity. This programme of study is used to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.

Religious Education is to be taught through year group units in our mixed age classes as laid out in the RE Overview which will ensure progression during a pupil's time in school. As each class has mixed ages these are on a two-year cycle. It is expected that at least 5% of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education. Christianity plays a central role in RE, taking up approximately two thirds of the time available. Appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is included. It is expected that at least two other faiths apart from Christianity should be studied in depth throughout a child's time at Westhead Lathom St James' CE Primary School. We aim to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice as they explore the significant theological concepts within Christianity as part of developing their wider religious, theological and cultural literacy.

RE Subject Statement: 'Primary educational legislation requires that all maintained schools provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.' Lancashire Agreed Syllabus. At the centre of RE at WLSJ is the question, "**What is it to be human?**" Through an enquiry based RE curriculum we intend to give the children the skills they need to rationally address this and many of the other big questions they will face throughout their lives. It is not our intention to lead children to any specific faith but to use RE to encourage pupils to learn and develop the positive attitudes of curiosity, wonder and appreciation, commitment, fairness and self-awareness (Lancashire Agreed Syllabus) to the beliefs and values of others.

It is essential that the RE curriculum maintains a balanced approach of Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion.

This can be expressed distinctively as **Learning about Religion**

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 who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason.

Learning from Religion

We learn from

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it
- responding personally to the transforming power of Jesus Christ
- examples of Christian living which give priority to the values of unconditional love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion and faith.

At WLSJ we believe that R.E. should help 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 pluralist and post-modern 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
- 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 and in the face of opposition.

R.E. in our Church school also helps children to:

- 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

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of Worship and invite representatives of local groups to talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups. Children are encouraged to prepare presentations to share these in Worship.

We recognise the fact that all children in our school have widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. A cross curricular approach is encouraged, where appropriate. A variety of teaching and learning methods should be used including - Story telling, drama and role play, poetry, raps, art, visits and local walks, discussion and circle time, prayer times, learning texts from the Bible, powerpoints and videos, writing about feelings, reflection, investigating and interpreting etc.

Links are made, when appropriate, with collective worship, local and national events, anniversaries or celebrations.

As a Church school there is a distinctive content of the R.E. curriculum evident. We aim:

- to provide opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year
- to study of the story of the local Christian community with its saints and martyrs
- to visit places of worship, especially the local St James Parish Church and Liverpool Anglican Cathedral, to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community
- to learn about the World Christian Church
- to welcome visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life
- to liaise with the local parish to enable these visits and links to occur
- to enhance skills to confidently use religious language to express knowledge and opinions
- to provide a well-used set of Bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of Bibles and prayer books from a variety of contexts
- to listen to Christian 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions
- to provide access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- to offer a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection

At WLSJ Religious Education should enable our children:

- to encourage mutual respect where children and teachers are able to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule
- that children make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity
- that pupils from Christian families are able to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith
- that pupils from other faith backgrounds understand and be encouraged in their faith

- that pupils with no religious background are given an insight into what it means to be a person of faith
- that pupils of all backgrounds have a safe place to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education makes a significant contribution to children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

Spiritual development within RE in a Church School enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment. Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice. Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

Inclusion

At WLSJ we teach R.E. to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. R.E. forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable children to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those children with Special Educational Needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those with English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. 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 these faiths.

Assessment

Assessment should be formative and summative and may be through discussion, photographs, observation plenaries, drawing and written work, dependant on age and ability. At the end of units covered, teachers record a broad level of achievement based on the assessment criteria outlined in each unit of work. Teachers will assess the children based on their work and contribution's during class activities. On occasions, where relevant, an assessment task may be given. Attainment of the children will be recorded so that progress throughout each year can be monitored. Children will be judged to be working towards, working at or working beyond the expected standard. Results of RE assessments will be reported at the end of each Key Stage.

School and Classroom Environment

Each class maintains a corner for spiritual reflection and prayer comprising a bible, cross and prayers. Each class is equipped with the necessary artefacts to lead their own class collective worship. The displays will reflect the colours of the liturgical calendar. There are also RE displays around school which are related to a variety of themes.

Equal Opportunities

Our teaching and assemblies reflect our Christian principles. In addition, we aim to give children a broader view of religion. We encourage different faiths to share their experiences in class and assembly times.

We recognise that parents have a right to remove their child from RE and assemblies and make arrangements for such requests.

The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England 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 ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and/or Religious Education cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep R.E. resources in a central store. These include:

- Religious Artefacts
- Illustrated Bibles
- Understanding Christianity
- DVDs and CDs for use in collective worship and classes
- Cross curricular material much of which relate to RE topics
- Teacher resources such as guidelines, topic resources, faith in history
- Persona Dolls-Islam, Judaism and Hinduism
- Visitors-Reverend John, Godly Play, Building Bridges Project