



Policy for Religious Education

Mission Statement

Archbishop Runcie First School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school which caters for children between the ages of three and nine years, drawing its pupils from a broad spectrum of society. We exist to educate and inspire young people. We aspire to achieve excellence in the standard of education and care we provide, to help ensure that all of our children grow to become confident, secure, caring individuals who aim high, deliver their best and develop a deep desire for independent and lifelong learning.

Inspired by our Christian vision, our Christian values are at the core of teaching and learning. We believe this makes our school distinctive in the learning experience it offers. We welcome all children and staff, of all faiths and none, at our school. In harmony with the Christian ethos of the school we offer all pupils the opportunity to experience the richness and diversity of God's creation through the curriculum we offer. In this way they are encouraged to explore values and beliefs and to identify with and empathise with those of other cultures and beliefs.

Religious Education in our School should be of the highest standard, always striving for excellence, reflecting the school's distinctive Christian character. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided in its school.

Introduction

Our Trust Deed states, RE '*shall always be in union with and conducted according to the principles and furtherance of the ends and designs of the National Society for promoting the education of the poor in the principles of the established church throughout England and Wales.....*' (26th April 1861). Governors interpret this to mean that 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 together.

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". (Taken from the Statement of Entitlement – Church of England Education Office 2019).

Although RE and Collective Worship naturally complement and enrich one another, they are managed separately.

RE is a core subject in all Church of England schools. RE has equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. In our school, RE lies at the very heart of the curriculum.

We ensure:

- that Governors adopt the Diocese of Durham Board of Education and Newcastle Diocesan Education Board Religious Education Syllabus for Church Schools, including the Understanding Christianity Syllabus.
- that at least 5% of curriculum time is devoted to RE (and should aim to be close to 10%)

- that Christianity plays an important role in RE, taking up around 50% of the teaching time.
- that appropriate teaching about other faiths and organised worldviews are included.

Aims and Purposes

The principal aim for RE is to enable pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief. This principal aims of RE in Church Schools, as taken from the Statement of Entitlement 2019, are for 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
- gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and organised worldviews, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied
- engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience
- 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
- explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

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.

Religious Education should equip pupils to recognise the common search of all humanity for ultimate truth and relationship with the divine. It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world, therefore, that respect for the great world faiths is fostered in RE within a Church School. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other faiths which is consistent with the school's loyalty to its Christian foundation.

Distinctive features of the RE Curriculum in our School:

To broaden the opportunities we provide during Religious Education, we also aim to provide a wide range of additional opportunities such as;

- opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year
- visits to places of worship, including the local parish Churches, to develop the understanding of faith being lived out in a range of different religions and views.
- welcoming visitors from the local parishes to share their experience of Christian belief and life
- welcoming visitors from a range of faiths and worldviews to share how their views and faiths are lived out.
- liaison with the local parishes to enable these visits and links to occur
- a set of Bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of Bibles and prayer books from a variety of contexts
- access to sacred texts from a range of religions and religious artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- a quiet space that can be used as a focus for reflection

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

Spiritual development within our school enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery and quest of something beyond themselves (for some this might be God), of their 'inmost being', the needs of others and of the wonder of the environment. In our school we use the language of 'in, out and up' as accessible language to enable pupils to speak about their spiritual development. Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ - along with embedded Christian values, which offer pupils

a secure foundation 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.

The Parental Rights of Withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education, as they may in any school. If parents decide to take this option for their children, the school must ensure that not only pupils are adequately supervised and have something purposeful to do but also that they are not made to feel isolated and excluded. Parents who may wish to exercise their right to withdraw their child from collective worship must discuss this in person with the head teacher, before making a formal request in writing, to withdraw their child. The Headteacher will explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation. It may be that children are withdrawn from only some elements of Religious Education or Worship, after discussion.

Reporting

All parents are invited to an informal consultation on all areas of the curriculum with their child's class teacher twice a year. All parents receive an annual written report in the summer term in which there is a summary of their child's progress over the year, including a summary of their child's development in Religious Education.

SEND

Religious Education needs to be challenging, relevant, interesting and open to all. To achieve this, a variety of teaching methods and strategies matched to age, attainment, capability and interest are employed. Children with special educational needs may, dependent on their specific SEN, receive extra support within the classroom where possible. Planning and teaching will endeavour to cater for all ranges of attainment.

Inclusion

We respect cultural background, gender, ability/disability and special educational needs ensuring that every pupil is given the appropriate opportunity to participate in all aspects of this subject. All pupils are given the opportunity to discuss their work and feel that their contributions are valued.

PSHE and Citizenship

Religious Education deals with religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin individual choices and behaviour, social policies and practices (for example, crime and punishment), and concepts and patterns of health. It also looks at the voluntary and charitable activities that help to make up a healthy society and provide opportunities for the development of active citizenship and involvement in society.

Issues in RE also clearly connect with social and political awareness (for example, human rights). Beliefs of humanity and the world influence how we organise ourselves and relate to others, locally, nationally and globally.

RE also contributes to pupils' understanding of Europe-the issues it deals with are Europe-wide and connects with common European history and experiences. It is not possible to understand the nature and significance of European identity without studying religion.

In addition, RE promotes the values and attitudes needed for citizenship in a democratic society by helping pupils to understand and respect people of different beliefs, practices, races and cultures. Similarities and differences in commitment self-understanding and the search for truth and meaning can be recognised, respected and valued for the common good.

The role of the Subject Leader

The role of the RE lead is to:

- ensure that the syllabus is delivered with progression across the year groups
- support colleagues in their planning and implementation of the scheme of work
- keep up to date with developments in RE and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate
- monitor progress in the teaching and learning of RE throughout the school and advise on resource needs
- take a leading role in organisation, ordering and maintenance of resources for RE
- be aware of the professional development needs of staff
- work with other schools in Diocese and Trust, as appropriate
- lead staff in the development and review of policy and guidelines
- maintain an active awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, including pupil voice
- promote RE with staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors
- prepare a subject action plan, including short and long-term development aims
- support the leadership team with preparation for SIAMS inspections.

Conclusion

The whole school community at Archbishop Runcie CE First School is committed to aiming for the highest possible standard of achievement for each individual pupil

We hope that children will reflect on religious teaching and develop their own beliefs and moral code, whilst maintaining a respect for the beliefs of others and a respect for the environment as a whole. This policy will be reviewed at least bi-annually by the RE Co-ordinator and Head Teacher.

Date	Reviewed / updated	Involved
June 2022	Reviewed & updated	TLA
7 th June 2023	Reviewed	EC/KM/TLA Cttee
April 2024	Reviewed	TLA
July 2024	Revised in line with new syllabus	SLT
January 2025	Next planned review (SLT/Governors)	