

St. John's Church of England Infant and Nursery School



Religious Education Policy

Statement of Intent

As a church school everything we do is rooted in our Christian values. At St. John's we teach the children about these core values:

Love, respect, honesty, forgiveness, friendship, courage, cooperation, peace, perseverance, trust, patience and understanding.

This is reflected in all our relationships between staff, children, parents, governors and the local community. It is reflected in how we teach, what and how our pupils learn within and beyond the classroom.

These values are fundamental in the implementation of this policy to ensure that we maintain our distinctive Christian character of which we are proud.

Religious Education Policy	
Written by:	Deborah Ramsbottom
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Review frequency:	Every three years
Target Audience:	All Stakeholders

The governing body shall conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. St John's CE Nursery and Infant School is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups. These factors were considered in the formation and review of this policy and will be adhered to in its implementation and application across the whole school community.



BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. The Agreed Syllabus for Hertfordshire 2012-2017, sets out the contribution that religious education makes to the education of all pupils growing up in contemporary British society. It is this Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

At St John's we place a very high value on respect for the individual. We are fortunate to have children from a wide range of backgrounds and a variety of other cultures and with differing beliefs. This enables learning about religions and hearing about their festivals to be more meaningful as it can be put in the context of what a friend has experienced. Showing respect for others' backgrounds and beliefs is also an extension of the respect we give to the individual.

It is our expectation that all children will take part in RE lessons but as a school we are committed to respect the faith stance of each individual. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from religious education (RE). If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes this may consult the head teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE.

A. VALUES AND AIMS

RE plays an important part within the broad and balanced curriculum offered at St. John's. We believe that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life and our Values education runs in conjunction with RE teaching. The RE curriculum reflects our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. develop their knowledge and understanding of the nature of religious beliefs and practices and the importance of these in the lives of individuals, communities, societies and cultures
2. explore and reflect on those aspects of human experiences which give rise to spiritual awareness and fundamental issues about beliefs and values
3. learn ways to express their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way
4. enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:

- a. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;
 - b. responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - c. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - d. expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
5. Recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within a society of diverse religious beliefs.

Religious Education will not be used to indoctrinate or to persuade pupils to take up any one particular belief. The emphasis will be upon the development of skills, attitudes and concepts which enable them to begin to recognise the particular importance which a belief has for the individual or group, and reflect on its significance or otherwise for their own developing beliefs and values.

B. OBJECTIVES

Learning

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own by Learning about Religions and Learning from Religion.

These two attainment targets, with their associated statements, set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum.

AT1 Learning about Religions

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meaning of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

AT2 Learning from Religion

- give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the questions of meaning within religion.

Children will be “Learning about Religions” and “Learning from Religion” through:

1. investigation; the use of first-hand and other resources to understand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories

2. questioning; developing curiosity about life, relationships and the natural world
3. empathy; developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as wonder, forgiveness, sorrow, joy and to try to see the world through the eyes of others
4. reflection; the ability to consider thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs of oneself and others
5. relating; linking significant features of religions, making associations between them, to understand what makes religions distinct and/or similar
6. expression; the ability to identify and explain feelings and aspects of religions

Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas.

- Belief and Teachings – e.g. stories, prophets, founders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death
- Religious Practices and Lifestyles – e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, effects on individuals
- Ways of Expressing Meaning – e.g. art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, silence/stillness
- Human Identity, Personality and Experience – e.g. preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people
- Questions of Meaning and Purpose – e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences
- Values and Commitments – e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, moral dilemmas

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches.

RE teaching at St Johns' draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect whilst deepening knowledge
4. parents; by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community



The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, role play, drama, asking and answering questions, using a range of sources including ICT, works of art, artefacts, visits and visitors.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined following the Eight Level Scale in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Foundation stage follows the Hertfordshire agreed syllabus for Religious Education. Where possible, cross curricular links are made to the other areas of learning. In the Foundation Stage opportunities for Religious Education are taught as part of developing children's understanding of the world and through personal, social and emotional development. Opportunities are provided through the year as child initiated learning and adult directed activities.

Ongoing observations of children are made and their knowledge and skills about cultures and beliefs are used to inform planning and provision. Observations and assessments are used to update the Early Years Outcomes and to inform the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

KS1

Judgments are made about the children's knowledge, skills and understanding which supports the children in learning, assists the teacher in curriculum evaluation and planning and includes both formative and summative assessment opportunities. Teachers use a variety of means of assessing pupils work in line with the whole school assessment policy. Through activities for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment, for instance in paired discussions.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and the RE report is written with reference to the records made or pieces of work retained.

TIME ALLOCATION

In line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2012 –2017, we plan for RE to be delivered flexibly according to the statutory requirements of the EYFS at Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1 pupils spend 60 hours over 2 years (approximately 10 hours per term).

PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage the school follows the Primary Scheme of Work for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. We use a combination of teaching RE through topics (or blocks of work where more than one curriculum area is linked together in a coherent way) and as a separate subject, depending on the material which has to be covered.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE leader is available to help with this and keeps a range of teacher's resources as a guide. When planning each unit of work the teacher will identify which parts of the programme of study are to be the focus, the learning objectives for the unit (i.e. what the pupils should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their work), the activities planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of the pupils.

CROSS CURRICULAR ISSUES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of British Values through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

PRESENTATION

Each unit of work will involve pupils in activities, such as already mentioned above (see sections on Teaching and Assessment). These will provide opportunities to demonstrate what they have learned "about religions" and "from religion". This work may be recorded in individual exercise books or in the 'Class Floor Book' in the case of class discussion or team activities, for example. In addition, pupils will sometimes be encouraged to present work for a wider audience, such as in worship (for the school and/or parents), or for display in the entrance area or hall. The children also



help plan and take part in services at the local church at Advent, Christmas, Easter and at the end of the academic year.

Equal Opportunities

Educational inclusion is about equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, background and attainment, including special needs and disability. We believe that every child is entitled to receive a high quality religious education curriculum. We expect every child to be able to learn effectively in a safe, secure and respectful environment.

RE will be inclusive of all children. It is important in RE to ensure the work being covered is appropriate to pupils who come from any religious background on whose families do not have a particular religious faith. RE is taught at a level appropriate to the age, ability and experience of the pupils and is therefore accessible to all. More able children who are working well above the overall level of their class or group will benefit from planning that may: add breadth, increase depth and accelerate the pace of learning by tracking forward to later objectives within or across key stages and extended research.

MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION

The RE leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders.

There is a regular focus on RE, led by the subject leader; where areas for development are discussed. This policy is reviewed at that time to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school.