



Religious Education Policy



Bishop Martin CE Primary School
2020-21



Our school's mission statement is 'Learning Together, in God's love'. Our approach to Religious Education supports this and all of our 12 school values; Generosity, Compassion, Forgiveness, Friendship, Courage, Respect, Thankfulness, Perseverance, Justice, Service and Truthfulness.

At Bishop Martin CE Primary School, we wish to be an inclusive community. Religious Education has an important and central place within our curriculum. Concepts and values are explored both through discrete RE lessons and through class and whole school Collective Worship. The Governors, in consultation with the Executive Headteacher and following advice from the Diocese, have decided to adopt the Diocesan Syllabus.

We believe RE has an important place in the development of every pupil.

In particular, through our RE curriculum, we aim to help children to:

- develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth
- enable pupils to encounter Christianity as the religion that shapes British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today
- contribute to pupils' own spiritual/ philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and belief
- enable pupils to learn about the other principal religions of Britain, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the life of their adherents

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and life-long learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. RE is an important subject in contribution to the schools development as a Rights Respecting School.



Teaching and Learning RE at Bishop Martin

The RE curriculum at Bishop Martin CE School is designed to deliver specified elements of the Programme of Study outlined in the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Primary RE Syllabus. The curriculum is organised into a long term plan to ensure coverage across all year groups.

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. Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities. Further information on Learning and Teaching can be found in the Learning and Teaching policy.

Time Allocation

A minimum of 5% of curriculum time is given to RE. Currently RE is taught as discrete lessons taught weekly.

Early Years Foundation Stage

During the EYFS, children's learning in Religious Education contributes to both the prime and specific areas of learning, in particular Personal Social and Emotional Development and Understanding of the World. This enables them to work towards the Early Learning Goals.

Objectives

The learning objectives, content and activities undertaken by the children at each Key Stage maintains a balanced approach of learning about religion and learning from religion.

Learning about Religions and Beliefs

- *knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and sources*
- *knowledge and understanding of religious practices and lifestyles*
- *knowledge and understanding of ways of expressing meaning*

Learning from Religions and Beliefs

- *skills of asking and responding to questions of identity, diversity and belonging*
- *skills of asking and responding to questions of meaning, purpose and truth*
- *skills of asking and responding to questions of values and commitment*

Curriculum Content

Through RE lessons we want pupils 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 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;*
- *understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.;*



In accordance with the structure of the Diocesan Syllabus we have agreed that pupils within each year group will mainly learn about Christianity however each year group will learn about another world faith. These are clearly planned out in the Long Term Plan.

Ideas for learning <i>about</i> Religion	Ideas for learning <i>from</i> Religion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multi-sensory experiences; ● Exploring religious art; ● Music; ● Visiting places of Religious importance; ● Interviews; ● Observing rituals; ● Handling religious artefacts; ● Personal research / reading / using the internet; ● Stories from faith traditions; ● Meeting people from faith communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussing religious and moral issues; ● Quiet reflection, silence and prayer; ● Making choices / right versus wrong; ● Supporting charities; ● Personal choice and showing responsibility; ● Saying thank you / showing appreciation; ● Asking the bigger question e.g. Who is God? ● Painting pictures to reflect mood as well as interpreting art; ● Empathy with and listening to others; ● Respecting others beliefs and practices; ● Giving opinions.

Planning / Teaching and Learning

- **Long Term Planning** shows how the Diocesan Syllabus is distributed across the years of Key Stages to promote curriculum continuity and progress in children’s learning.
- The Diocesan Religious Education Units of Work can be used as teacher’s **medium-term plans** on the basis that they are dated and annotated. (Links with other subjects should also be noted.)
- **Short Term Planning** needs to build on the Diocesan Units of Work, activities should be matched to clear learning objectives and a range of teaching and learning strategies should be used taking into account the needs of the children. It is essential that the RE curriculum maintains a balanced approach of Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion.

The Understanding Christianity Approach

The approach developed for *Understanding Christianity* is based on the use of core concepts of Christian belief, as expressed in the Bible. Eight core concepts are identified that pupils need to understand. These concepts tell the ‘big story’ of the Bible. Each year group displays a wall frieze to illustrate seven of the eight core concepts that are explored in the *Understanding Christianity* materials and are referred to when teaching Christianity.

RE Books and Seesaw (Y1-6)/ Tapestry (EYFS)

Each child (from year 1 upwards) needs their own RE book which should include a cover sheet for each new unit of study. Seesaw (Y1 – 6) and Tapestry (EYFS) will be used to record evidence of pupils’ discussions, comments and ideas, visits and visitors, photographs, group work and post it notes. ‘I can’ and ‘I know’ statements can be used to annotate work on these platforms.

Knowledge Organisers

A knowledge organiser is developed from the Long Term Plan. These documents are the graphic representation of the key knowledge, vocabulary and images required to form a schema of learning for the particular unit of work.

Each knowledge organiser presents teachers, children and parents with the key knowledge needed for a particular area/aspect of RE. These knowledge organisers form the bedrock of the topic and are carefully constructed by teachers to build on prior knowledge and provide a schema for each unit of work. Each document also provides teachers with the opportunity to quiz children regularly to ensure that key knowledge is retained in children’s long-term memory.

Every RE lesson starts with a retrieval activity which means children have the opportunity to recall and present their learning to ensure it is committed to long-term memory. Knowledge organisers support the use of retrieval practice because they have been designed to be easily testable by removing key definitions or key words.



Assessment

The assessment and expectations of RE in our school are based on the ‘Ladder of Expectation and Achievement’ provided by the Blackburn Diocesan board of Education 2017. To ensure that RE is being taught to the highest standards and beyond it is strongly advised that the ‘Ladder of Expectation and Achievement’ is used as a guide in the setting of tasks.

The ladder can also be used to make judgements about the level of individual pupils’ achievement. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to be achieving at ▲ level (rung 2 of the ladder). At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to be achieving at ✦ level (rung 4 of the ladder). Therefore, teachers can set appropriate tasks and make judgements as to whether or not pupils in their class are working at, towards or exceeding expectations of achievement.

These judgements are to be recorded on the recording sheet once every half term at the end of a unit. Each unit sheet has a list of expected knowledge marked with the symbols from the ladder along with a list of expected outcomes. These lists are generic and it is expected that teachers will incorporate them into learning objectives.

It is important to remember some activities cannot be levelled because they are linked with the child’s personal spiritual development such as the writing of prayers.

Assessment for learning in RE: Some Key Principles

- Use ladder of expectation as guide to task setting
- Tasks should promote both learning about and from religion
- Clear criteria shared with pupils
- Quality tasks show what pupils can do
- Clear stepping stones / feedback
- Measure pupil’s work against criteria as set out in the ladder of expectation

Hierarchy of skills in RE

The table below identifies the skills in Religious Education as progressively set out in the assessment ladder of expectation. The table should be used as a guide when planning lessons to ensure tasks are appropriately challenging and to provide children with the opportunity to work broadly in line (or above) national expectations for their age group.

	<i>Learning about Religion</i>	<i>Learning from Religion</i>
◆	Explain impact and express opinion	Explaining the impact of religion and expressing their own views of religious questions
✦	Show understanding and apply ideas	Showing understanding of religion and apply ideas themselves
■	Describe and make links	Describing religion and making links to their own experiences
▲	Identify and ask	Identifying religious materials and asking questions
●	Recognise and talk	Recognising and talking about religion

Resources

Resources to support the teaching and learning of Christianity and other major world faiths can be found in the RE resource cupboard situated in the resource area. There are a range of teaching guides, activity books and religious artefacts.



Understanding Christianity is a resource that can be used alongside the Blackburn Diocesan scheme of work. The long term plan has suggestions of how this resource can be used for particular units. In addition, links to the Understanding Christianity resource are also indicated at the beginning of the relevant Blackburn Diocesan unit. This resource can be obtained from the Religious Education Subject Leader.

Responsibilities for RE within the school

The **subject leader** will monitor RE within the school through analysis of assessment data, regular communication with staff responsible for the teaching of RE, and through checking of pupils work.

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, **the Governing Body and Executive Headteacher** 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
- 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.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

At Bishop Martin we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Executive Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Bishop Martin.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

- The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.



Religious Education Policy

- *If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.*
- *Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.*
- *If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.*
- *Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.*

Date: November 2020

To be reviewed: November 2021

RE subject leader: Jill Brorom



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