

# Religious Education Policy

## Whitfield St James' CE (VC) School

*Whitfield St. James' Church of England School has a living Christian foundation following the teaching of Jesus and claiming His promise of 'life in all its fullness' for everyone (John 10:10, Church of England Vision for Education). In our family-like community, everyone's God-given uniqueness is welcome and important. We are committed to providing a safe environment in which children and adults can flourish.*

*We aspire for all to grow in academic wisdom - developing knowledge and skills that will inspire ambition and excellence. We aspire for all to acquire spiritual wisdom, questioning without fear to understand the universe, each other and ourselves as God's work in progress as we try to be more like Jesus.*

*We set our sights on learning together in this Christian community to renew hearts and minds and give hope for the future for everyone as we journey in faith.*

### Introduction

At Whitfield St. James' school, we believe the main purpose of the teaching of R.E. is to contribute educationally, emotionally and spiritually to the development of our pupils as individuals, by fostering a growing understanding of the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and religious practices of humankind.

**Our school vision states:** Working together to achieve our best.

**Our Christian vision states:** Working together to achieve our best... to reach our God-given potential.

**Our behaviour ethos states:** Treat others as you want to be treated.

The teaching of Religious Education is set in the context of our core Christian values each of which has a secure root in biblical teaching.

### Our Christian values are:

<b>Thankfulness</b>	<b>Appreciating the everyday blessings in our lives</b>
<b>Community/Koinonia</b>	<b>Enabling everyone to flourish together</b>
<b>Hope</b>	<b>Trust in God's promise for our future</b>
<b>Wisdom</b>	<b>Knowledge, skills, understanding, doing the right thing</b>
<b>Compassion/Charity</b>	<b>Reaching out to those who are vulnerable</b>
<b>Forgiveness</b>	<b>A chance to start again if we make a bad choice</b>

These are drawn from the 15 values explored by *Christian Values For Schools* and may be changed on a yearly basis.

Compassion, Creation, Resilience, Forgiveness, Friendship, Hope, Humility, Justice, Koinonia, Peace, Reverence, Service, Thankfulness, Trust, Wisdom.

Each half term, we focus on one value. It will form the basis of display, Collective Worship and permeate the whole school curriculum and ethos.

Quiet, interactive areas for stillness, reflection and response are designated in each classroom. These intend to foster a sense of awe and wonder and to enable children's spiritual awareness to be deepened through reflection, whilst they learn to explore, understand, respect and appreciate Policy for Religious Education 2018

diversity in faith, beliefs and traditions. The area may include prayer books, bibles, a prayer chair, prayer books/ boxes, thought books, inspirational verses/pictures.

### **Aims of teaching R.E.**

***The Principal aim of R.E. in Derbyshire schools is to enable pupils to participate in an on-going search for wisdom, through exploring questions raised by human experience and answers offered by the religions and beliefs of the people of Derbyshire and the wider community, so as to promote their personal development. (D.A.S.)***

At Whitfield St. James' School we aim to:

- develop knowledge about, and an understanding of, the mission and teaching of Jesus Christ, where He is the focus of Christianity, and where He, in the foundation of a Church of England school, is at the centre of our journey of faith. This journey is to be travelled through the teachings of the Bible in RE lessons, Collective Worship and in the way we conduct ourselves within the moral framework of our community of St. James'.
- enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and the Christian narrative and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians.
- to enable pupils to talk about core Christian theological concepts such as God, Creation, Salvation, the Kingdom of God, The People of God, Incarnation, The Fall, Gospel and explain why they are important to Christians.
- be involved in worship, prayer and Christian service.
- enable pupils to encounter Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- encourage attitudes of openness and sensitivity towards people whose religious beliefs, traditions, worship, celebrations, lifestyles and other customs may be different from our own.
- enable pupils to learn about other major world religions (and world views), their impact on society, culture and the wider world, facilitating pupils' expression of responses and insights.
- help children to acquire and develop skills to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of Christianity, of religion and belief more widely, of themselves, the world and human experience.
- contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own journey of faith, beliefs and life choices.
- explore with children the relation between religion, personal and social development and other areas of experience and knowledge and how they contribute to morality and social responsibility.
- foster a sense of awe, respect and wonder leading to a desire to penetrate more deeply into those areas with which religion is concerned and to develop their sense of identity and belonging.

Drawn from the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus (2014-2019); The outcomes from The Church of England Education Office's 'Religious Education in Church of England Schools – A Statement of Entitlement' (2016) and Understanding Christianity.

### **Why teach R.E.?**

As a church school we are committed to finding ways to contribute to every pupil having a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ. Such positive encounters will show pupils to the Christian faith that invites, but does not coerce. Two thirds of the R.E. curriculum time is devoted to teaching about Christianity whilst one third to the teaching of world faiths which may be represented in the school community and neighbourhood. This gives opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build

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understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. R.E. is taught in the context of our whole school philosophy of teaching and learning which promotes enquiry, questioning, debate, collaboration, challenge and reflection.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Learning about and from religious traditions helps pupils to appreciate which aspects of life have been significant for most of humanity throughout the ages. 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. It also helps to show them what shapes people's behaviour and motivations, and points pupils towards positive models for their own lives. RE lessons particularly include

opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually - 'helping them to recognise and deepen their relationships with self, others, the planet and, for many, with God.' (*Jill Stolberg, Church of England, Birmingham*)

In addition, when appropriate, R.E. lessons offer spiritual moments for stillness, reflection and response.

### **Personal development and well-being**

R.E. plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become resilient, 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.

### **Planning**

Planning is done in Phases. R.E. may be planned as a separate subject or, where appropriate, within a cross curricular topic. The recommended time allocation for R.E. is considered at the planning stage. Sometimes RE may be delivered in a block instead of one distinct lesson a week; a whole day/week of RE. The expectation is that there is a minimum allocation of 5% of curriculum time for RE.

This is set out in the table below, and based on the most recent advice in *Religious Education in English Schools* QCDA, 2010, and *Designing the Curriculum, Special Schools and Academies Trust*, 2008.

**Allocation of time for RE for all should be clearly identifiable.**

**4-5s**

**36 hours of RE**, integrated into learning, e.g. part of Personal, Social and Emotional Development, and Understanding the World.

**5-7s:**

**36 hours of tuition per year** (e.g. 50 minutes a week, or an RE week each term where 12+ hours of RE are taught)

**7-11s:**

**45 hours of tuition per year** (e.g. an hour a week, or a series of RE days where 45+ hours of RE are taught)

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that:  
In EYFS pupils study Christianity and Religious experiences represented in the class or school.  
In Year 1/2 pupils study Christianity and (minimum one other)  
In Year 3/4 pupils study Christianity and (minimum two others) Hinduism/ Christianity and Islam  
In Year 5/6 pupils study Christianity and (minimum two others) Buddhism/

### **Teaching Methods/Learning Styles**

We use a variety of styles and teaching methods. Class lessons, group work and other opportunities are given for individual expression. R.E. is taught through story, art, music, drama, use of artefacts, videos, I.C.T., and written work. We seek to encourage discussion, the development of thinking skills and the use of periods of stillness and reflection. Where possible children are given first hand teaching experiences, visits to church and other places of worship, visitors to school and contributions made by other pupils and their families. 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. Currently, R.E. is taught in accordance with the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus 2014-2019 and using the Church of England Education project resource Understanding Christianity, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content.

Our Religious Education curriculum is based on two main strands:

- Learning about religions and beliefs – exploring (D.A.S.)/Core Knowledge building blocks (U.C.)
- Learning from religion and belief – responding (D.A.S.)/text, connections and impact (U.C.)

### **Equal Opportunities**

Whitfield St James' School is (Church of England) voluntary controlled. Religious Education is offered to all pupils in accordance with the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus. This includes teaching Christianity and other major faiths and the school policy reflects this approach. As a Church of England School, we aim to provide a course of religious education within the framework of the Church's year, appropriate to the educational needs of children at different stages of development. We aim to help children understand the presence of Christian beliefs and values in our society and in the world and their biblical and historical significance. We wish to encourage the development of strong and harmonious links between school and church for the benefit of the community of Whitfield St. James'.

### **S.E.N.D.**

At Whitfield St. James', we teach R.E. and Collective Worship to all children, regardless of their abilities. Our teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the individual needs of children with learning difficulties. When teaching Religious Education, we consider the targets set for the children in their Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.s).

### **Assessment, monitoring and Self Evaluation**

In planning R.E., teachers will incorporate opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge of religious perspectives and allow children to share their own experiences. Assessment in R.E. will focus on the development of the pupils understanding about religion and their evaluative responses regarding their own and other children's religious experiences. Assessment will be made by observation during discussion, art, drama and responses to oral and written work. We recognise that R.E. does provide opportunities also for pupils to utilise their writing skills including argument, persuasion, debate and recount. However, we also recognise that children can excel in R.E. even if their reading and writing skills are not at age related expectations and we strive to ensure that they are able to demonstrate this in a range of ways. One assessment will be carried out each term, linked to current topics, using Learning outcomes detailed in Understanding

Christianity and the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus. These are recorded and used to inform report writing. Evidence of planning, assessment and work is collected per phase. This evidence could be photographic such as displays. It is stored in the R.E. co-ordinators file.

The R.E. Co-ordinator contributes to the Church school self-evaluation process and to the on-going development of the subject including writing the action plan for the subject on an annual basis. Currently, the subject leader is also a Foundation Governor.

### **Role of Head Teacher and Governors**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher ensure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the R.E. curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in R.E. and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching R.E. are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for C.P.D.
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support R.E. learning objectives
- clear information is provided for parents on the R.E. curriculum and the right to withdraw
- R.E. is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations for R.E. and pupils can make good progress.
- pupils receive their entitlement to R.E.

### **Role of the Co-ordinator**

The school appoints an R.E. Co-ordinator who engages with the Derbyshire L.E.A. and Church of England Diocese for continuing professional development and training. The Co-ordinator has responsibility for R.E. resources and the purchase of resources within agreed budgets. The Co-ordinator will try to support colleagues who are planning R.E. activities. He /She keep staff informed of any new changes or developments. He /She will review the policy in line with the Whole School Development Plan, and after discussion with colleagues decide targets for the future. He /She will collect evidence of work and planning from all Key Stages.

### **Resources**

We have built up a wide selection of children's books which are kept in the school library. Teacher's resource material, books, DVDs, posters, photographs and artefacts are stored on the R.E. shelf in the teachers Resources Store near the library, and in the cupboard in the coordinator's classroom. Some resources, which are mainly used at KS1 or EYFS are stored in their appropriate areas.

### **Church links**

Clergy from St. James C.E. Church and other church leaders are involved in Whitfield St. James' Collective worship on a fortnightly basis at least.

Whole school Harvest, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost services are held in church, with an open invitation to school and church community to attend. Rev. Toby May's wife, Helen, is a Foundation Governor.

### **The right of withdrawal from RE**

Parents 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 head teacher to discuss any

concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Whitfield St. James' School.

**This policy was updated on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 by Mrs V. Mackey and ratified by the Governors on .....**

**References:**

Understanding Christianity

<http://www.understandingchristianity.org.uk/>

Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus

<http://derby.anglican.org/education/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Derbyshire-Agreed-Syllabus-2014-2019-Final1.pdf>

Statement of entitlement

[https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1384868/re\\_statement\\_of\\_entitlement\\_2016.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1384868/re_statement_of_entitlement_2016.pdf)

Christian Values For Schools

<http://www.christianvalues4schools.org.uk/>