



St John's CE (A) Primary School

Dedication - Courage - Joy

Religious Education Policy 2019-2020

INTENT:

Our Religious Education (RE) Policy is based on the Vision and Values of our Christian School.

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:7

The purpose of this policy, is to set out clearly to all stakeholders the ways in which RE is conducted in our school. At St John's CE (A) Primary School Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in defining the school's distinctive Christian character and is therefore linked closely to our vision, as stipulated in SIAMS schedule 2018 (Strand 7).

We recognise as a Church of England school that RE is an integral part of our curriculum and indeed our daily lives for this reason we acknowledge that this is a core subject in the National Curriculum 2014. We believe that the study of RE plays an important role in development 'of the whole child' for several reasons: it plays a vital role in developing religious literacy, gives a sense of belonging to our school and wider community, it allows opportunities to study and develop a deeper understanding of Christianity together with a range of other religions and, more importantly, it embeds our Christian Values (Dedication, Courage, Joy).

Using guidance from the Church of England document, '**Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014**' our aim is that our RE curriculum should,

".....ensure it provides a more coherent, progressive and challenging approach to the teaching of Christianity within the context of the wider exploration of the diversity of religion and belief in the modern world"

".....explore ways of extending pupils' ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry as part of their learning in RE"

RE Statement of Entitlement

RE teaching at St John's CE (A) Primary School will be in line with the recommendations of the **Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools**, published by the Church of England Education Office (June 2016), see link below:

<http://smartfile.s3.amazonaws.com/d57a4d93b010f2ac6f24bc8cee2d789e/uploads/2019/02/NEW-RE-Statement-of-Entitlement-for-Church-schools.pdf>

Christianity will be at least 50% of RE curriculum time as outlined in the document above. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of RE in our school. However as a Church school we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews as part of our commitment to develop hearts and minds. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also learn to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own ideas and beliefs. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice and discrimination as they learn to become happy, healthy, global citizens.

IMPLEMENTATION:

At St John's CE (A) Primary School, RE teaching follows the legal requirements of the **Education Reform Act (1988)**, which places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement for all pupils. Alongside the National Curriculum, the school bases its RE provision on the Lichfield Diocesan RE Guidelines, Understanding Christianity resources and the Stoke syllabus based on RE Today to enhance teaching and learning.

In addition to Collective Worship, on average, at least 5% of curriculum time will be dedicated to the teaching of RE objectives explicitly, although cross curricular links will be made where appropriate. As well as weekly RE lessons, the children participate in RE themed days and a Faith and Understanding Week. Within this teaching allocation at least two thirds of subject content will be allocated to an exploration of the Christian faith, and the concepts, beliefs, teachings and practices that lie at its heart. All teachers plan and deliver RE lessons to the children with the support of the RE lead if required.

The aims of Religious Education in our school are:

- To help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with the Bible and its stories
- To help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide
- To enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture
- To give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or moral beliefs
- To help pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of religious texts and teachings whilst understanding their impact on the lives of believers.
- To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief, of themselves, the world and human experience.
- To develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth, and so to consider important human questions, values and concerns.
- To nurture understanding, respect and open-mindedness and inspire lifelong engagement with the study of religions and beliefs.

The RE Curriculum at St John's CE (A) Primary School contributes to other areas of the curriculum and personal experience. RE plays an important part to the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Spiritual	Widening pupils' vision of themselves and their own experience, within the context of a growing awareness and understanding of God.
Moral	Helping each pupil develop their own informed values
Social	Helping pupils understand some major forces shaping the values of our society
Cultural	Aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

In addition to the RE lesson, further links will be found across the curriculum especially with **personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)** whilst integrating **British values**. This is achieved by using the weekly Picture News resource which gives pupils a wider perspective of the world together with a deeper understanding of global issues. RE can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and thus ensuring the well-being of all pupils.

The management of RE

RE is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects. Teachers should share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development (SIAMS 2018). As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE. Therefore, a significant number of staff meetings are designated to the development of staff.

The RE subject leaders are responsible for:

- producing a scheme of work for the school and a coherent long term plan (LTP) on a two year rolling program
- supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision
- ensuring Religious Education has status within the school
- keeping in touch with subject developments and disseminating information as appropriate
- auditing and recording current resources, supplementing resource provision when money is available and disseminating this information to staff
- undertaking personal development and subject training and ensuring provision for staff INSET
- monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes
- ensuring rigorous systems of assessment are in place (SIAMS 2018) and are in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus
- creating the RE Development Plan and ensuring its regular review
- accountability for RE standards in the school
- meet with member of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible
- monitoring the teaching and learning of RE through learning walks, book scrutinises and pupil voice which informs the RE Action Plan

IMPACT

As part of our dedication to provide an outstanding education for all children at St John's CE (A) Primary School. By the end of their primary education, it is our aim that they can:

- Compare and contrast the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied and show how they are connected to believers' lives
- Describe different aspects of belonging to a religion – symbol, story, festival, belief, faith in action, ritual, worship
- Express religious beliefs and ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology and describe what they mean
- Ask questions sensitively about the lives of believers and suggest appropriate answers
- Reflect on the decisions people make – including believers – and suggest possible outcomes
- Compare their own experience and identity with others – including believers
- Reflect and empathise with the big questions of life, suggesting some answers and insights
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth
- Value the religious journey of faith

During the lesson, pupils personally reflect on their learning and resources are carefully planned with scaffolds used to provide differentiation and extensions. Assessments are continual based on the 'Big Question' at the start of each RE unit of work, this is then revisited at the end of the term. Teachers use the child's self-assessment and the work completed to assess the child's understanding which is then recorded on a class assessment sheet.

In our school, we understand that whilst being an aided school we have greater freedom but we choose to adhere to the Lichfield Diocese guidance when designing and implementing our RE curriculum.

We understand that **Section 48 SIAMS** inspections will give a judgment on the progress, achievement, teaching, learning and overall effectiveness of RE in aided schools which refer to Strand 7 of the SIAMS schedule 2018. At that the contribution of RE to the school's distinctive Christian character will be assessed as will the impact of RE on SMSC and the way in which the subject is meeting the needs of learners and moving them forward in their personal spiritual journey.

Right to withdrawal - see appendix

At St John's CE (A) Primary School, we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the Head Teacher who will then invite the parents into school to discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the RE and worship provided by the school and set out the options open to the parents as set out in education law. 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. Where a pupil is withdrawn from RE and do not take part in alternative religious education they will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff whilst doing work set by their parents which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parents beliefs and values.

Approved and signed off by

Head teacher.....

Chair of Governors.....

Appendix

Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education March 2017

Religious Education

The government guidance *Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* states that:

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those who withdraw by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over)

In all forms of church school, the religious education provided should contribute to the Christian character of the school, and this is in aspect of the school's work which is subject to the *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)*, whether VC, VA or academy.

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. (Non-statutory Guidance 2010)*

Any parent considering withdrawal must contact the Head Teacher to discuss any concerns relating to the policy, provision and practice of religious education at the school.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

It is important that the school makes clear on its website and through other forms of communication, the RE syllabus being taught in school. There needs to be a clear understanding of the relevance of the RE curriculum and how it respects pupils own beliefs. It is good practice to review requests to withdraw from RE and collective worship annually.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Whether the parents wish their children to be withdrawn from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it.
- Parents can withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship, and not withdraw their child from the remainder of the RE.
- Where pupils are withdrawn from RE or collective worship, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or incur extra cost.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn from RE, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This could be provided at the school or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided. Outside arrangements are permitted providing the necessary safeguarding procedures are in place and the LA or Trust Board is satisfied that any

interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from withdrawal will only affect the start or end of a school session (*Non-statutory Guidance 2010*)

It is important that schools are fully aware of issues surrounding religion, race and culture and ensure that parental right to withdrawal requests to not hamper their responsibilities to ensure equality for all and the promotion of British Values.

