

Sir John Offley CE (VC) Primary School

Religious Education policy

‘With God all things are possible.’



Key Details

Date written/updated: Sept, 2023

Date of next review: Sept, 2024

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 At Sir John Offley CE VC Primary School, Religious education (RE) plays an important role in defining the school's distinctive Christian character. At Sir John Offley we live each day through our motto, 'With God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26) and the core Christian Values of Love and Forgiveness which are related to our school motto and our third value; Aspiration has its own scripture verse.

This creates a foundation for our children to develop a love of learning, be motivated and be fully prepared for each stage of their life. With **love** we will nurture all to be emotionally secure; with **forgiveness** all will know that every day is a new beginning and with **aspiration** all will strive for success.

Religious Education is regarded as a core subject within the school's curriculum. It has a vital role in developing and deepening pupils understanding of Christianity, in all its forms, and fostering appreciation and understanding of other faith traditions.

As the Church of England document, '***Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014***' recommends that the RE curriculum in all schools 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"

At Sir John Offley CE VC Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

1.2 The aims of Religious Education in our school are to help children:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;

- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- Be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- Develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- Develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

1.3 The outcomes for pupils at the end of their time in our school are that they are able to:

- 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, and 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 / insights.
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth.
- Value the religious journey of faith.
- Develop pupils' ability to interpret and appreciate religious imagery and expression.

2. The legal position of religious education

2.1 Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class

who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship.

2.2 Our school RE curriculum is based on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. It meets all the requirements set out in that document. In addition, the school uses the Lichfield Diocesan RE Guidelines, Understanding Christianity resources and other appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning.

2.3 The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions. Christianity will, therefore, be no less than two thirds of RE curriculum time. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of RE in this Church of England school. However, as a Church school we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews. 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.

3. Teaching and learning style

3.1 We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and Passover to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

3.3 Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious' faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups.

3.4 We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

4. Curriculum planning in Religious Education

4.1 We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. In addition, we use the Understanding Christianity resources, which we have woven into a whole school Long Term plan. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

4.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in Religious Education in two phases. The overview maps the Religious Education topics studied in each term for each year group.

4.3 Our progression map of specific knowledge and skills gives details of each unit of work for each term with big questions and subject specific vocabulary for each year group.

As we have had some mixed-age classes at times, we track the topics studied by each year group and review to ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

4.4 The class teacher then plans each lesson using the Staffordshire agreed syllabus and Understanding Christianity resources and makes notes on the specific learning objectives covered. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

5. Foundation Stage

5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

5.2 In the reception class, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Additional RE topics covered throughout the year are outlined in the long-term plan and taught weekly within the reception classes.

6. Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects.

6.1 English

Religious Education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in English lessons have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion and this, is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Computing

We use computing where appropriate in Religious Education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use IT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

6.3 Personal, social and health education PSHE (including SRE)

Through our Religious Education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. For example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

6.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching Religious Education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions and our Core Christian Values: Love, Forgiveness and Aspiration. We

enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in doing so; they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

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.

7. Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs

7.1 At our school we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious Education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

7.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors - classroom organisation, teaching materials and teaching style - so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

7.3 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a synagogue, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8. Assessment and recording

8.1 We assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and through pupil voice. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as

necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the expectations of the unit. We record our judgements on an outcomes sheet. These judgements are shared with the RE lead each term and used as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

9. Resources

9.1 We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep resources for Religious Education in a central store where there is a separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. Each class also have bibles in the classrooms.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 Religious Education is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE.

10.2 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

The R.E. subject leader will meet regularly with a member of the Diocesan RE advisory team and present the head teacher with a strategic action plan each year and updates termly to the head teacher and governors.