

Religious Education Policy



Powerstock CE VA Primary School

Learning together to be the best that we can be

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
John 10:10

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do:

“Learning together to be the best that we can be.” The vision is rooted in John 10:10 – I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live life well together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews¹) and for the religious freedom of each person.

RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office Feb 2019²

Pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews. RE has a very high profile within the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain.

Christianity is taught as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teachings of Jesus and the Church, alongside a range of religions and worldviews. We encourage pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while creating a safe space for them to explore their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

We aim for pupils to be inspired by the subject and that through their learning in RE they will develop a wide range of skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world.

Legal Requirements

¹ The term worldviews is used throughout this policy/in our school to refer to a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an 'institutional' worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a 'personal' worldview for an individual's way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from one or many institutionalised worldviews. **Based on Commission on Religious Education, Religion and worldviews: The way forward A national plan for RE (Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018) p4.**

² Church of England – Religious Education in Church Schools – A Statement of Entitlement – February 2019

As a Voluntary Aided School, our governing body determines our RE curriculum, which is in accordance with the school's trust deed and has been discussed with The Diocese of Salisbury Board of Education. The school teaches religious education according to the Dorset agreed syllabus.

Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

Aims of RE - Curriculum Intent

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all pupils:

- Through exploration of core beliefs and using an approach that critically engages with biblical text, to enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a diverse, global and living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know about and understand different major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, and to appreciate the diversity, continuity and change within those religions and worldviews
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs, ways of living, thinking and values.

- **Intent**

- At Powerstock School, we believe that the teaching of Religious Education is vital for the development of each child as an individual. RE contributes to our children's development; further empowering them to become tolerant, understanding citizens, who live out the British Values and who are spiritually, morally, socially and culturally literate. We believe that our children should also be able to display religious and theological literacy. Our RE curriculum contributes to all of these essential elements of knowledge, concepts and qualities.
- Our intent is that our curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious for all pupils. We use the Understanding Christianity resource combined with the Discovery RE scheme. It is coherently planned and sequenced including a balanced mixture of Christianity (at least 50%) and world religions (Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism with some Buddhism). Our intention is to make sure that children understand the relevance of RE in today's modern world and how it affects our lives, and that the lessons provide a high quality, coherent and progressive experience of the subject, with scope for cross-curricular learning.

Our curriculum:

- Provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging.
- Develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- Encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses.
- Enables pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- Teaches pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- Prompts pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society.
- Encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- Develops a sense of awe, wonder and mystery

- Nurtures each child's own spiritual development.

Curriculum balance

Reflecting the school's trust deed, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1-4.

RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship is not considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

Curriculum Implementation

RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. Lessons provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all faiths and worldviews. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.

Teaching in RE aims to challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

- Religious education is usually taught in a 'whole class' setting but with flexibility to allow for discussion, questioning and reflection in small groups and individually
- Visits to local churches and places of worship and visitors to school are encouraged
- A variety of teaching approaches including teacher presentations, role play, drama art and story-telling as well as quizzes, questions and answer sessions, discussions and debates are employed in order that RE learning is active and enjoyable as well as rigorous and challenging.
- Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:
 - Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
 - Reading and critically analysing texts.
 - Interpreting information from different sources.
 - Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
 - Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
 - Engaging in pair and group work.
 - Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
 - Experiencing visits and visitors.
 - Taking part in outdoor learning.
 - Taking time for reflection.

In line with the Statement of Entitlement we aim to provide:

- A curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice
- A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide

- The opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion or worldview as lived by people in Britain and in the world
- A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place
- Engaging and varied learning activities that provide for the needs of all learners, supported by high quality resources
- The opportunity for pupils to develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development and also to pupils' understanding of British values
- An assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts

Implementation

RE is generally taught as a discrete subject for at least an afternoon in each class weekly, with appropriate links to other curriculum areas wherever suitable. In addition, we have regular visits to our local Church for assemblies, including Christian festival celebrations throughout the year, visits into school by our Reverend Chris and occasionally from other religious representatives. We also arrange visits to places of worship further afield and of a faith other than Christianity. Our annual trip to Salisbury Cathedral for the Leavers' Service confirms the pupils' understanding of places of worship and instil a sense of awe!

By using UC and Discovery alongside each other, we are ensuring children are given the opportunity to become religiously literate. Understanding Christianity is based upon seven core Christian concepts. Children will explore the different concepts in a range of inspiring activities as they move through the school, starting in Foundation Stage and developing a great depth of understanding by the time they reach Year 6.

Understanding Christianity believes that not only should children show an understanding of the religious text and teachings but they should also demonstrate a deepened and more thoughtful approach to their learning and how this influences day to day life. Therefore, is based upon a three step enquiry model of teaching.

We use 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 reflection.

Teachers ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. Each enquiry within Discovery and Understanding Christianity has built-in assessment. These tasks provide formal opportunities for teacher assessment of the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This stand-alone evidence is used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions and annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in reaching a best-fit 'level' (Below, Meeting or above Age Related Expectations). Teacher assessments are an overall judgement based not only on written responses to the focus question, but also observations on how children contribute in class, the confidence and willingness with which they answer questions and share their own ideas, their use of appropriate vocabulary and their recall of appropriate links from previous learning. An assembly journal is also kept and records pupil thoughts, questions, interpretations and understanding of aspects raised and focused on in collective worship times.

Staff update the tracking document termly with their assessments so that the Subject Leader can assess the effectiveness of learning experiences provided. The Subject Leader also conducts pupil interviews, learning walks and book looks throughout the year. The Link Governor is also invited to join the RE Lead during the monitoring cycle as a critical friend. This enables an informed discussion and review of the subject within the school. This helps the children by enabling the Subject Leader to make informed decisions about necessary changes to any aspect of the planning, implementation and assessment of RE within the school and to update the Action Plan.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.
- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy³
- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.
- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.
- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

Cross-curricular links - RE supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship (PSHE&C).

Managing the right to withdraw⁴

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum and our school will comply with any such request. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child arranges to discuss this with the headteacher and to take up the opportunity to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum in school before making this decision.

In the event that parents still wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons, our school will undertake responsibility for their supervision with regard to health and safety. Information on these arrangements are clear on our website.

Resources

³ *Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.* (Church of England - *Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE. 2018.*)

⁴ Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over). (*DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28*) The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

Religious education is funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese of Salisbury. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and worldviews as appropriate.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Assessment and reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- Be directly related to the expectations of the Dorset Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Be carried out through suitable opportunities identified in resources used in teaching, such as Understanding Christianity.
- Seek to identify pupils' development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Include pupil self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.

The Impact of RE - Assessment, Recording, Reporting

Impact

For our Understanding Christianity units, we assess formatively within lessons and summatively at the end of units with our Assessment Grids. For Discovery RE units, we utilise Assessment for Learning in lessons as well as through summative tasks within or towards the end of a unit.

By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, the impact of our RE teaching will be that pupils:

- Have a secure understanding and knowledge of the religions studied and be confident to answer ultimate questions.
- Ask and offer possible answers to challenging questions about the meaning of life, beliefs, nature of reality and morality.
- Have the ability to ask significant and reflective questions about religion and demonstrate a good understanding of issues relating to the nature, truth and value of religion.

- Have a sense of self, identity and belonging to flourish within the community and be responsible citizens.
- Show respect, tolerance and understanding of all religions and beliefs.
- Have a strong understanding of how the beliefs, values, practices and ways of life within any religion come together.
- The ability to link the study of religion and belief to personal reflections on meaning and purpose.
- The ability to exemplify the School's Christian values in all aspects of life that are rooted in the teachings of the Bible.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In our school, the RE Subject Lead rigorously monitors the subject following the school's monitoring schedule. This will include Learning Walks, Book Looks, Planning Looks and Pupil Voice. Governors have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of RE and how the RE in the school reflects our Christian vision. Key questions include:

- How well does RE 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 text? And how well does RE help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide?
- How well does RE enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of major world religions and worldviews and their impact on society and culture?
- How well does RE give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions?

The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The RE subject leader will assist the headteacher and governors by:

- monitoring long term and medium-term plans to ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement to religious education and that RE provision reflects the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#).
- monitoring RE through work scrutiny and observation of teaching, carrying out pupil conferencing/pupil voice sessions; reviewing the learning environment/lesson visits.

The subject leader will also:

- Produce and regularly review this subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Be responsible for drawing up an action plan for religious education. Generally, this will be an annual plan and should be informed by this policy.
- Keep a file/photographic record of examples of pupils' work to demonstrate continuity and progression.
- Ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff so that assessment informs future teaching.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Keep up to date with information, initiatives and developments in religious education and disseminate this as appropriate.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.

- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.
- Liaise with the school's Diocesan adviser and/or the Diocesan adviser with responsibility for Religious Education

Date policy reviewed and adopted by the Governing Body's Policies Sub-Group: July 2024

Frequency of Review: Every three years

Next review Due: July 2027

-