



# ST CUTHBERT WITH ST MATTHIAS CE SCHOOL

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

### MAY 2021

We take inspiration from our vision,

*'As a school community we are inspired by the parable of the Good Samaritan from the Bible (Luke 10:25-37), where we are encouraged to love one another courageously and with compassion. Through friendship, kindness and thoughtfulness, we will nurture each other to learn and flourish as individuals.'*

***Loving one another. Learning for our future.***

#### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

To give R.E. the same status and taught with the same rigour as the core subjects of the National Curriculum.

- Sharing the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Fostering a sense of community where each person is respected valued and encouraged to feel confident and supported in their acquisition of core values.
- Developing skills of thinking critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically so that they are able to:
  - Forgive
  - Respect and value the views of others
  - Appreciate the uniqueness of each individual
  - Develop a sense of commitment and service
  - Develop a clear understanding of the links between different world faiths and the similarities and differences between these faiths.
  - Accept the responsibilities and challenges of living in a multicultural and multi-faith society.

The aims of Religious Education **in church schools** are:

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

The outcomes for pupils at the end of **their** education in church schools are that they are able to:

- Think theologically and explore ultimate questions
- Reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief
- Develop the skills to analyse, interpret and apply the Bible text
- Recognise that faith is a particular way of understanding and responding to God and the world
- Analyse and explain the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community
- Make a well informed response to Christianity
- Respect those of all faiths in their search for God
- Reflect critically on areas of shared belief and practice between different faiths
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth
- Reflect critically and express their views on the human quest and destiny

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in RE including engaging with key theological concepts and Bible texts, drama, looking at artefacts and use of film, Art and music. Every year each class of children make at least one visit to a place of worship which enhances or deepens the children's learning



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and experience (see SMSC calendar) and often linked to the other religion they are studying. Children also visit other Christian places of worship such as other churches in our Diocese.

Teachers regularly have input from a member of the clergy as part of a unit of work in RE, so the children are well used to discussing ideas and themes with the clergy as well as their teachers. A member of the clergy also delivers RE lessons in classes on certain topics such as Baptism. There are always many opportunities to ask questions and the emphasis is on children coming to their own views and beliefs with the support of the adults and peers around them.

We follow the LDBS RE Curriculum which we have adapted for our schools, with an emphasis on learning about the key biblical stories from the Bible in nursery and YR, and introducing the other key religions from Y1 onwards.

Lessons are planned to incorporate learning about religion and from religion. There should be opportunities for children to relate any learning to their own lives and experiences wherever possible.

Time for reflection and revisiting learning is emphasised in all areas of the curriculum and is particularly important in RE lessons and children are in the habit of having time to reflect on key services and special assemblies that we have throughout the year.

We use our Friday Celebration Worship to celebrate the successes of our week-with Star Learner awards, Good Samaritan awards and presentation or home learning awards. At this whole school worship, classes present their learning including their RE learning from the half term and parents are invited to attend.

#### **OTHER FAITHS**

We believe that the focus on learning about and from other faiths is important so that we are able to be tolerant and knowledgeable in our multi-faith world. One third of the curriculum teaches other faiths from Y1 to Y6. Pupils learn about Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism and visit places of worship linked with these faiths.

#### **PLANNING**

Our curriculum is carefully planned across all year groups to ensure that it develops the ideas and themes at core Christian times such Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Pentecost and Ascension Day.

The long term planning of religious education involves a whole school approach using the LDBS Syllabus with the help of our Clergy and including an annual Holy week. The intent of the curriculum reflects that of the LDBS:

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness
- To offer a systematic enquiry- based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
  - Ability to be critical thinkers
  - Ability to engage critically with texts
  - Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions
  - Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews
  - Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions
  - Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.

The medium term planning is based on the LDBS Unit plans and led by the RE Coordinator



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Short term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher, following the LDBS guide

#### **ASSESSMENT**

This is both informal and formative, through general observation of children, their involvement in activities, their contribution to discussion, and a formal/summative assessment at the end of each topic. Teachers then pass on copies of these assessments, once a term, to the RE Co-ordinator. These assessment records are passed onto the next teacher, at the end of the academic year. Teachers also hand on specific notes to the next class teacher which can give relevant comments on a child's approach and response to RE and their ability to take on core values.

Marking RE books is sensitive to the children's understanding and development. Children regard their RE books as special books and teacher's feedback marking reflects this in their comments. They ask further questions where appropriate and these are discussed verbally or responded to by the children in green pen. We use a start and a wish feedback.

#### **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

We are a very inclusive school and the range of needs in the school is wide. Teaching is carefully differentiated to ensure that children with Special Needs can access as much of the religious education that their class learns as possible. Much of the work in Religion involves discussion, drama and reflection and every child's contribution is valued.

Religious education offers a wonderful opportunity for all children to realise their 'equality' as children of God.

#### **BIG QUESTION TIMES**

We value the importance of thoughtfully challenging our thoughts and preconceptions. Together each half term, our KS2 classes gather in our school hall within an environment of quiet music and calm to reflect on Big Questions which may arise in RE lessons or in the wider world. Questions such as '*What is truth? How many times should we forgive? Is it important to have a faith?*' are discussed and reflected upon. Children share and explain their thoughts and others reflect on a new way of thinking about a challenging question. Photographs and evidence of thoughts are collected in our Big Question book.

#### **OUR COMMITMENT TO RE IN CLASS-QUESTIONS TEACHERS ASK THEMSELVES**

*Focal points for Prayer Table:*

- a) Is there a focal point for prayer in my classroom?
- b) Is it situated at eye level and available for whole and available for whole class prayer? If not, can it be moved to a central area when required for whole class prayer? The focal point should always be visible in the classroom, an important reminder of the spiritual dimension of our lives.
- c) Does it incorporate good religious art (icon, picture) together with a candle? Are there bibles of appropriate complexity easily available to all children? Are the values easily available?
- d) Is the Big Question of the current topic on display as well as Biblical Core Concept?

*Children's work:*

- a) Do I offer a variety of tasks in keeping with skills and ability of all the children (e.g. for a child struggling with reading – a task involving very little reading)?



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b) Do I use a multimedia approach with tasks involving art experiences, music, drama as well as written and oral discussion work?

Tasks should be such as to enable children to succeed and acquire new knowledge

*Display:*

a) Do I afford prime wall space to RE work and so convey a powerful non-verbal message about the importance of RE in our class and in our school?

b) Is this work well-presented and well-mounted?

c) Do key words and vocabulary appear on displays?

*Assessment In RE planning and preparation, have I built in a way of assessing:*

a) The experience provided for the children

b) The response made by the children to these experiences

c) What knowledge, values, attitudes and skills the children have acquired?

d) How the children assessed their tasks and learning?

#### **MONITORING OF RE**

This takes place regularly and is undertaken by the RE Co-ordinator and RE Governor (Fr Paul) and fed back through to the PWCE and Teaching and Learning Committees and Senior Leadership Team.

#### **LITURGY AND WORSHIP (see Collective Worship Policy)**

Prayer and reflection is central to school life and as a community we worship in a variety of ways.

Through a daily worship, where the children are made aware of the need for quiet contemplation, reflection and prayer time. Every Thursday we join together for a whole school worship including prayers led by Church Priest. Every Friday we come together to celebrate the successes of the week. Singing and music play an integral part of all these worship sessions.

Once a week classes have their own class worship in the classroom where a prayer area or altar is the focus for daily class worship. The focus is on our school vision and the related values as well as on prayer. The children are encouraged to pray and are taught the traditional prayers of the Church. Children are encouraged to offer up personal prayers.

We say our Grace before all meals. We say a morning and an End of Day prayer.

In addition to whole school worship, the main events of the Liturgical year are celebrated by the whole school through music, drama and prayerful reflection. Children throughout the whole school contribute to these celebrations.

We have three Eucharistic Worships a year (one per term) and these are held in our church. Parents and family members are encouraged to join in the celebration of these liturgies.

#### **SPIRITUALITY**

See Spirituality Policy

#### **HOME, SCHOOL, PARISH, RELIGIOUS SERVICES and SPECIAL CELEBRATION ASSEMBLIES**



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We are committed to linking with our church, our parish and deanery community. We encourage and value attendance at worship and celebration assemblies in Church or in school by our parent community. We link with our church with fundraising events and with our partnership Deanery schools on projects involving the elders in our community. We hold special services in our St Cuthbert church through the year:

- Autumn Term: Harvest Festival, Christingle
- Spring Term: Epiphany; Ash Wednesday / Lent; Holy Week and Easter; St Cuthbert's Day
- Summer Term: Ascension; Pentecost; St Matthias Day

#### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

See Collective Worship Policy

#### **SERVING THE WIDER COMMUNITY - THE IMPACT of our RE LEARNING**

As our vision guides us, we are committed to using our RE knowledge to empower us to support and nurture others in our school, community and world. We support three main charities across the year: Embrace Charity in autumn term, Children in Need at Christingle and the British Heart Foundation in summer. Alongside these, we also support our community in other ways-we support our local care home, Inkerman House by sending cards, and other items, and by choral performances, and with our international cohort of pupils, other charity drives at times of international disasters. Our pupils are also dedicated to driving fundraising initiatives themselves and hold these activities before or after school.

We link with initiatives in our local authority to support elders and to celebrate key events at Christmas or Easter. We link with our Deanery Partnership schools at worship each term in other's churches. We invite our parents to attend our Thursday and Friday worship assemblies, and to attend our church worship.

#### **Monitoring and review**

It is the role of a named school governors with responsibility for religious education, spirituality and collective worship (PWCE, Teaching and Learning Committee and Fr Paul) to monitor the policies, and the practice of RE teaching. The governors concerned liaise with the Head Teacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.



Signed: *G. H. H. H. H.* May 2021

**Name of School:** St Cuthbert with St Matthias CE Primary School

**Policy review Date:** April 2021

**Date of next Review:** April 2023

**Who reviewed this policy?** Ratified by the PWCE committee



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#### APPENDIX A

##### Recommended non-negotiables for RE for class teachers

The core purpose of RE is to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy. To enable this to happen, effective teaching must include the following:

- RE must be taught in accordance with the RE syllabus agreed by the school Governing Board.
- The correct time allocation must be given to the teaching of RE in accordance with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- RE must be taught as an academic subject.
- Children must make good or better progress in RE.
- Teachers' subject knowledge must be secure.
- RE lessons must be planned in a sequential way, taking note of prior learning and knowledge the children bring to the classroom.
- The RE curriculum must be balanced, giving children exposure to the study of theology, philosophy and human/social science. (Believing, thinking, living.)
- RE lessons must be planned in accordance with the school's planning expectations for all other subjects.
- Teachers must be aware of what knowledge the children are expected to know by the end of a unit of learning.
- Teachers must be aware of end of unit expectations at the beginning of the planning stage so that accurate assessments can be made.
- On-going assessment must take place.
- RE must be taught through an enquiry-based approach.
- The big question must be shared with the children at the beginning of the unit and referred to in each lesson.
- Each lesson must be driven by a question which links to the big question being explored,
- Core concepts in Christianity must be shared with the children and referred to throughout the unit of learning, enabling children to gain greater insight into what these concepts mean.
- Religious vocabulary must be shared, explained, taught and developed throughout a unit of learning.
- Opportunities for children to engage in Biblical text analysis must be made available.
- A range of high-quality questions must be asked by the teachers across the unit of learning and within a lesson.
- A wide range of activities must be included in the unit of learning, giving children the opportunity to express themselves in a variety of ways and show what they know and understand.
- Opportunities for effective talk, discussion, debate and critical thinking must be made available as this is often when you will hear children share their profound thoughts and demonstrate what they know and the skills they are able to apply.
- Presentation in books must be of a high standard.
- Pupil's work in books must be in line or better than work seen in other core subjects.
- There must be evidence in the books that demonstrate children are making good or better progress in the subject.
- Teacher feedback must relate to RE knowledge, understanding and skills and not English based objectives.
- Teacher feedback must lead children to deepening their knowledge and understanding in RE. One way of doing this effectively, is to give children a question to consider and adequate time to respond.
- Visits and visitors must be planned for across the year to support the RE learning. Ensure you follow the school's guidance on planning an educational visit and guidance around inviting visitors into school.

##### RE learning journey to include the following:

- The big question
- Six subsidiary questions
- Religious vocabulary related to the unit
- Children's response to each question
- Examples of children's work related to individual lessons



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Each classroom to have a Biblical timeline on display so that children can refer to it during the teaching enabling them to develop their understanding of the Bible and its chronology.



## APPENDIX B Core Concepts

