



St Stephen's
CE Primary School

St. Stephen's C.E. Primary Religious Education Policy

Learning, loving and growing; together as God's children.

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Introduction

As a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, we maintain the right of parents to have their children educated in a school where the Christian Faith is taught.

Acknowledging the context in which children in twenty-first century Bury are brought up, we believe it is important to help children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and also of other world religions.

R.E. enables children to reflect on what it means to have a faith, to develop a spiritual knowledge and understanding of the values and benefits of life within a Christian Faith and to begin to put their own religious values into practice in school and outside.

Our Vision



Our vision is about celebrating the uniqueness of every individual, inspiring a lifelong love of learning and experiencing life in all its fullness. It is rooted in John 13:34:

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

Our school will be a place where:

- everyone feels safe, welcome and valued.
- everyone feels excitement, joy and challenge through developing their God-given gifts to achieve.
- everyone flourishes and excels, grows in character, faith and wisdom and develops hope and aspiration.
- everyone is equipped to move on in their journey with confidence, resilience and motivation.
- In partnership with others we seek to serve and make a valuable contribution to God's world.

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The Legal Position

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

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St Stephen's Church of England Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided in the school. Therefore the Governors in consultation with the Head teacher have decided, following advice from the diocese, to adopt the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE

The Governors have agreed that at least 5% of our curriculum time is devoted to RE. Also Christianity will play a central role in RE, taking up between two thirds and three quarters of the time allotted. The Governors have also agreed that appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is included.

The Governors recognise that although Religious Education and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another, they should be managed separately. Therefore each has a separate policy. The Governors have also created the role of link governor for R.E. and Collective Worship on the governing body. The coordinator s and link governor liaise to discuss various aspects of R.E. and this ensures an effective line of communication.

Learning about Religion

We learn about

- God who reveals the truth about himself and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, his action in history and through the prophets;
- God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us;
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason.

We learn from

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it;
- responding personally to the stories and teachings of Jesus Christ;
- examples of Christian living which give priority to the values of unconditional love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion and faith.

Religious Education at St Stephen's should help our children to:

- reflect theologically and explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society;
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief;
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today;
- understand the challenge faced by Christians in today's pluralist and post-modern society;
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text;
- recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world;
- begin to develop their own commitments, beliefs and values;
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious;
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions;
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour;
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world;
- understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world that children should be encouraged to foster a respect for the followers of the other world faiths. It is essential that this respect is based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of those faiths.

Therefore RE at St Stephen's should also help our children to:

- learn *about* other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and *from* them through encounter and dialogue;
- recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God;
- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths;
- enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition;
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions.

Our Religious Education Curriculum has a distinctive content including:

- opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year;
- study of the story of the local Christian community with its saints and martyrs;
- visits to places of worship, especially the local parish Church to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community;
- welcoming visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life;
- liaison with the local parish to enable these visits and links to occur;
- skills to confidently use religious language to express knowledge and opinions;
- a well-used set of Bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of Bibles and prayer books from a variety of contexts;
- the facility to listen to Christian 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions;
- access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence;
- a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection.

Religious Education at St Stephen's should enable:

- pupils and teachers to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule;
- pupils to make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity;
- pupils from Christian families to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith;
- pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith;
- pupils with no religious background to be given an insight into what it means to be a person of faith;
- pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society

RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development.

Spiritual development within RE in a Church School enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment. Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice. Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

Teaching and Learning Style

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.

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 Easter, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

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. 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;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child.

Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs

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.

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, teaching style, and differentiation – 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.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education.

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 our Church, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Resources

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 has their own Bible in the classroom's Prayer Corner. There are class sets of Bibles and New Testament Bibles that children can also access.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

The Religious Education provided by St Stephen's CE Primary School is in accordance with the Church of England Foundation. This foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England ethos, removal of pupils from Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school.

If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Headteacher will explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation as it may be that only some elements of Religious Education or Worship are objected to.

RE Co-ordinator: Mrs S J Denney

Date: September 2023

Renew date: September 2024