

St John's Highbury Vale CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy

St John's Highbury Vale Church of England
Primary School vision for Education:

*“I can do all things through
Christ who strengthens me.”*

Philippians 4:13

This can be live out through our school moto,
‘every child, every opportunity, every day.’

At the heart of our school vision is a desire for an authentic and life-giving relationship with one another and with God. We believe that through Christ, who gives us the strength, all can achieve within a learning environment where every child is valued as a unique individual created in the image of God, and where teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard.

Introduction

Reviewed February 2022

St John's Highbury Vale C.E Primary School is an inclusive school situated in the heart of Islington. This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils in developing a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and the school's vision and associated Christian values.

We have high expectations of all our pupils and deliver a curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling children to become religiously literate within an inclusive and safe space that promotes critical thinking and celebrates and respects difference.

What is RE?

RE is a core and academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Aims of RE

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a 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 and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
 - To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.
- (Church of England Statement of Entitlement)

Time allocation

RE is taught weekly in every year group. Additional time is given to the teaching of RE through Prayer weeks and RE days that have a specific religious focus given to them.

Legal requirements

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education or Collective Worship. Parents who wish to withdraw their child must provide written notification to this effect. Arrangements will be made for any child withdrawn and suitable supervision provided for them.

Our approach to the teaching of Religious Education at St John's Highbury Vale

R.E flourishes in schools when it is given equal status with other subjects of the National Curriculum. R.E is a core subject in our school. Our aim is that R.E at St John's is delivered through our vision of, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me', and is a celebration of our humanity without exception or exclusion. This begins in our Reception Class.

The governors have adopted the LDBS RE syllabus as the school's main resource for the teaching of RE.

The aims of the syllabus are as follows:

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – vision for Education (Church of England)
- 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 ask deep and meaningful questions
Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews.
Ability to reflect, respond and express their own opinions and beliefs.
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.

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content.
- Promote critical engagement with Biblical and sacred texts.
- Offer challenge and an in-depth exploration of religion/belief and practices.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or world views to their own.
- Progression of learning both in terms of knowledge and understanding and skills across the primary age range.

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- The Christian vision of our school.
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement
- The Church of England's vision for Education.

Within every unit, the sequence of learning is as follows:

- Enquire:** Engage with the big and subsidiary questions which focus on theology.
- Investigate/explore:** What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where pupils will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective the following strategies are used:
Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
Using challenging and controversial questions
Extended pieces of writing
Discussion which continually asks 'Have we gone deep enough yet?'
Pupils engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc.)
Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues
- Evaluate/communicate:** What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue

about the learning. Children use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus is on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

• **Reflect on/express:** What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It is always based on knowledge and understanding, our values or SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural) development.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage RE is planned for and taught under 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' with a balance of child-initiated experiences and direct teaching. In St John's Early Years, the LDBS syllabus is delivered in the Reception class. It is supported by learning the foundations of Christianity through their exploration of many parables through Godly play, as well as celebrations and festivals of the Christian and other world faiths.

Teaching and learning strategies in the Early Years Foundation Stage include small and large groups, individuals, and circle times to teach moral and theological concepts. The children are given the opportunity to experience and respond to the world around them with all their senses. Many cultural and religious stories are used to stimulate the children's questioning and thinking. Opportunities are provided to visit religious places and handle artefacts so that a first-hand experience is offered to the children at an early age of their development.

Religious Education in Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Islam at an age appropriate level. Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions. Children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life. They will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own. Some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths; Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will be religiously literate at an age appropriate level. That they will be able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary. That they will have a solid understanding of teachings of the Christian faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two, to be able to express and justify their own views with confidence. We aim for them to be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts. We want our children to be able to draw on their religious knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

Access to the Curriculum

We recognise through our differentiated planning system that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts and knowledge and to flourish.

All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

Environment and Resources

We aim to provide a rich interesting, stimulating environment in which Religious Education can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking.

We plan and organise the environment, with differentiated tasks and activities to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of development and learning need. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum.

We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts.

We value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors. We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with our three local parishes and work collaboratively with the churches and the wider community.

As well as individual learning, we also encourage children to work co-operatively and in collaboration on a range of Religious activities.

Planning and assessment and monitoring

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is two thirds Christian and one third other major world faiths.

Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored in the following way:

- Book scrutiny
- Cluster moderations with other deanery schools in order to bench mark standards beyond the school
- Summative and formative assessment
- School assessment grids are completed for every child at the end of every half-term
- Target Tracker is analysed by the R.E lead. Data is reported termly to the Full Governing body and discussed with teachers during pupil progress review meetings
- Moderation meetings take place termly with class teachers so that the R.E lead can ensure accuracy of teachers' judgements
- Pupil voice
- Learning walk
- Lesson observations

Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help children flourish.

Children are encouraged to share their learning at home. Parents are invited to all collective worship activities (see Collective Worship policy) so that children can share their learning and achievements.

Parents/carers are kept informed and are encouraged to discuss their children's learning through parent consultation evenings. Staff empower parents with information on their child's curriculum aims and achievements through regular newsletters which outline the term's programme of work, parent's evenings and the annual report.

Role of the Religious Education Lead

It is the responsibility of the Religious Education lead to:

- To keep up to date with developments in the area of Religious Education. Attending all LDBS training and forming links with other Church of England schools.
- To monitor and evaluate the planning and teaching of Religious Education across the school in collaboration with the leadership team.
- To support staff in the teaching of Religious Education across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation.
- To offer advice about resources and keep the resources bank up to date.
- To lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards.
- To plan and lead INSET to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective Religious Education teaching.
- To work closely with the Senior Leadership Team to identify INSET needs of individuals, teams and the whole school.

Review

This policy is a working document and therefore is open to change and restructuring as and when the need arises.