

**St. John's Church of England Primary School**



**St. John's School Vision Statement**

*Shine like stars*

*Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.*

*Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.'*

**Matthew 5:16**

**Policy: R.E. Policy**

**Reviewed: May 2023**

**Future Review: May 2025**

## Statement of Vision and Values

In consultation with pupils, parents, governors, community members and staff our vision and values were generated.

### Our Vision

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*Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.*

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**Matthew 5:16**

### Our Values

*Our school values help us.....*

*to grant **forgiveness**,*

*to grow in **respect**,*

*to practise **endurance**,*

*to share **compassion**,*

*to work for **justice** for everyone,*

*and to know **confidence** through Christ.*

## **Introduction**

This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education (RE) providing them with a framework, ensuring progression and continuity across the school, to ensure pupils make progress throughout their school journey, 'knowing more and remembering more.' It is set within the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, the vision, values and aims of the school and within the confines of the LDBS Syllabus. Support and guidance have also been provided by the London Diocesan Board for Schools.

St. John's CE VA Primary School is an inclusive school situated within the London Borough of Enfield. We have high expectations of all our pupils with a core focus on supporting the whole child in growing which is reflected within our RE vision:

*'We believe that all children should be religiously literate in order to express their own beliefs and be respectful and tolerant of other faiths and those of no faith. We encourage curiosity, questioning and deeper thinking, and challenge children to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues.'*

## **What is RE?**

RE enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions, traditions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. RE provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. The subject also provides all pupils with the opportunity to both 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**

Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

## **Time allocation**

RE is taught weekly in every year group. In Reception and Key Stage 1 it is approximately one hour per week and in Key Stage 2 approximately 2 hours per week. Additional time is given to the teaching of RE through RE talks and religious visits. Collective Worship is also timetabled daily but is separate to our RE time allocation (please refer to our Worship policy).

## **Legal requirements**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education or Collective Worship. We would hope however, in the light of our induction policy and home school agreement, that this will not be necessary, and parents who have specifically chosen our school will wish their child to fully participate in Religious Education and 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.

## **How we teach RE**

RE at St. John's School is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum.

## **Curriculum Intent**

As a school we follow the LDBS RE syllabus, its intent is:

- 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 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.

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content.
- Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.
- Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own.

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).

### **Implementation of the LDBS syllabus**

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

Enquire: Engage with a big and subsidiary questions which focuses on theology.

What are the big theological questions you are exploring?

Investigate/explore: What is the religious content and context being explored?

How deep can we go? This ‘explore’ stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to ‘deepen’ learning:

- Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
- Using challenging and controversial questions
- Extended pieces of writing
- Discussion which continually asks ‘Have we gone deep enough yet?’
- Children 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 should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be 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 should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC 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 teacher led activities. To ensure consistency (like the rest of the school) the LDBS syllabus is used to deliver the curriculum. It is supported by learning the foundations of Christianity through their experiences of parables /bible stories and through celebrations and festivals of both 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. Many cultural and religious stories are used to stimulate the children’s questioning and thinking. Opportunities are also 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. Learning is evidenced in a whole class floor book.

## **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. 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. In addition, 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.

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

## **Impact of the LDBS syllabus**

- Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews. (Religious literacy)
- Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points.
- Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- Children will be able 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.
- Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness.

## **Environment, Access and Resources**

At St John's our goal is 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. We recognise that effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating Religious Education curriculum that builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to Religious Education.

Our RE teaching makes a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. It has a role in challenging stereotypical views and appreciating, positively, differences in others. It also helps to develop pupils' self-esteem. All children have equal access to the whole RE curriculum and are given opportunities for developing their skills regardless of gender, race or special needs. Some children may need support to access text or communicate their ideas by working with a suitable partner or adult.

At St. John's we also value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors. With this in mind, we are always keen to, develop a good working relationship with our parish church and work collaboratively with the church and the wider community. This has been really hindered with the absence of a vicar since May 2021 but to try and compensate for this we are working closely with the PCC and the Bishop to support the potential appointment of a new vicar. In the meantime, Father Stephen has very kindly agreed to take collective worship on the first Tuesday of every month and to lead all our church services throughout the year.

### **Planning, 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 and triangulated (as part of the Monitoring cycle) in the following way through:

- Work scrutiny / Book Looks
- Cross School moderation - in order to, bench mark standards, beyond the school
- LDBS assessment grids - which are completed for every child at the end of each term
- Internal data - which is tracked, analysed, discussed with staff and reported back to the full governing body termly. (Action points are then generated to support progress through pupil intervention, targeted teacher training / support etc.)
- Pupil progress meeting discussions
- Summative and formative assessments
- Pupil voice
- Learning walks
- Lesson observations

### **Parents and Carers**

At St. John's we recognise that a partnership between the school and parents/carers is essential to help children flourish and 'reach their full potential.' With this in mind, children are encouraged to, share their learning at home, information regarding the pupils' learning in RE and Collective Worship is explained in the class sections of the fortnightly newsletter. Further information is also provided regarding the curriculum on our website and fortnightly newsletters share information regarding the themes for Collective Worship, dates when parents and carers are invited to join us in Collective Worship and Church Services as well as giving an insight into school life.

Parents are also invited to Collective Worship activities and Church services (see the Worship policy) so that children can share their learning and achievements. Every Friday parents are very welcome

to join our Celebration Assembly where they gain a real insight into school life and they are part of the collective worship that takes place in this as well. Attendance at these weekly assemblies is extremely high and parents really value being part of this celebration and collective worship. Every term all classes invite their parents in to be part of a Class Collective Worship that the pupils plan, lead and evaluate. Finally, parents/carers are kept informed and are encouraged to discuss their children's learning during parental sessions that are held throughout the year, parents' evenings and an annual report is sent out detailing their progress.

### **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 (currently supported by Ms Chebbi who is attending the majority of the RE training at the LDBS as she is teaching RE across KS2) 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 individual 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.

### **Evaluation/Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader and ratified every two years by the Governing Body.

Updated – May 2023

Review Date – May 2025