



Religious Education Curriculum Statement

Why is Religious Education important?

The main aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live. It enables children to gain knowledge, understanding and skills needed to approach questions around religion, belief and spirituality, it provides an opportunity for pupils to reflect on their own ideas and ways of living. RE lessons are a safe space for children to explore their understanding of faith through the study of Christianity and other world religions. Since September 2024 and our implementation of Syllabus 2023 by the Manchester Diocese, the RE curriculum has been intentionally designed to provide a balanced study of Christianity and world religions. This approach enables children to develop a secure understanding of Christian belief while also appreciating the diversity of faiths and worldviews, supporting respectful dialogue and understanding of others. Through a varied range of activities, children will be encouraged to explore how God has been revealed to humanity. They will be able to see how this has led humans to respond in a way which exemplifies Christian values such as: justice, forgiveness, compassion and love. The study of RE also enables children to explore the Bible's 'Big Story' and 'core concepts' of Christianity as outlined in *Understanding Christianity* resources. Additionally, through knowledge and understanding of other religions and belief systems, pupils will be encouraged to recognise points of similarity and thereby develop respect for and show tolerance of all people. They will be given opportunities to critically reflect upon their own spirituality, beliefs and values, thinking about the ultimate questions facing society today and will begin to get a sense of their own unique place and active role within the world. Within each RE lesson, children engage with philosophical, theological and sociological dimensions of religious education. This enables them to develop an understanding of belief, make personal and meaningful connections, and appreciate the impact of religion on individuals, communities and the wider world.

What is Religious Education like at St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery?

Intent

Religious Education is delivered with the intent of supporting and strengthening the school's distinctively Christian ethos. The curriculum is carefully designed to ensure a balanced approach, with equal coverage of Christianity and world religions, while remaining rooted in the Christian calendar and life of the school. Through this approach, RE aims to nurture children's spirituality, understanding and respect for belief, faith and worldview.

The RE curriculum aims to:

- enable children to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts.
- enable children to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their significance and impact in the lives of Christians.
- develop children's ability to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own developing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), themselves, the world and human experience.

Additional aims include:

- Enabling children to learn about a range of world religions and non-religious worldviews represented in the United Kingdom, particularly Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Humanist approaches, exploring their beliefs, traditions, practices and the impact these have on the lives of followers.
- Developing children's spirituality by encouraging engagement with big questions, fostering curiosity, awe and wonder, and providing regular opportunities for personal reflection.

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- Encouraging pupils to become thoughtful and respectful critical thinkers who can discuss religious and non-religious beliefs in a mature, balanced and informed way, recognising the impact these beliefs have on their own lives and the lives of others.
- Developing pupils' understanding of the school's Christian values and British Values, enabling them to make meaningful links between their learning in RE and how these values are lived out through actions within the school, local community and wider world.

Implementation

Throughout the school from Early Years to Y6 all children's lessons will be planned in accordance with the Manchester Diocese Syllabus (2023) and will be supported by materials from the *Understanding Christianity* program which is produced by RE Today (2016) For thematic units and those pertaining to other faiths, they will be supported by materials from RE Today Services (2018). Some shorter units, with a focus on Christmas and Easter are supported by Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education resources. Units of work are organised across a two-year rolling program due to our mixed class system.

The shorter units, focusing on Christmas and Easter, have been included on yearly long term plans where a full unit for Christmas and/or Easter did not feature. This is because we felt it was important to ensure there was some focus every single year on these key periods within the church calendar. Units of work will usually be taught through a weekly RE lesson with recording taking place through class floor books in Early Years and individual RE books for Y1-Y6. Each unit of work focuses on a key question which children will endeavour to answer on an ongoing basis through their work within that unit. Each unit is also centered on a 'Big Idea' key concept, which is taught through carefully selected biblical texts.

In line with the Manchester Diocese Syllabus (2023), and materials produced to support it, our curriculum units have three key areas within them which are explored over the course of the unit. These are as follows:

- **Making sense of belief/the text.** This involves identifying and making sense of core religious and non-religious beliefs and concepts; understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions; understanding how sources of authority such as texts are used and expressed and interpreted in different ways and developing their own skills in interpretation.
- **Understanding the impact.** This relates to children developing an understanding of how the beliefs they have explored in the prior section impact upon individuals' lives, considering how and why people put their beliefs into action in different ways and how this varies between everyday lives, within communities and the wider world.
- **Making connections.** At this point children are encouraged to evaluate and reflect on and make connections between the beliefs and practices studied and their own lives, actions and ways of understanding the world.

To support these three areas and to ensure the teaching of RE is implemented well, we teach lessons that provide a mixture of teacher input, group and individual work. Content and key concepts are delivered in a range of ways including reading from holy texts or books, storytelling, text study, interpretation of art, poetry and videos. Work produced takes a variety of different forms including pictorial, written and recording of verbal responses and discussions. Where appropriate artefacts are used and external visits, often to places of worship, further support the curriculum. Additionally, where possible we may have visits to school from people of different faiths. Opportunities to put our school values into action are part of our whole school offer i.e. raising money or resources for charity and links between such occasions, courageous advocacy and our RE curriculum are highlighted.

Impact

Specific outcomes for individual units are shared within long term plans and from published resources and children's progress towards these is monitored throughout each unit, mainly through the use of formative assessment approaches. Opportunities are taken to revisit content if needed.

On a broader level the impact of our RE curriculum will be seen through children who:

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- Have a strong knowledge and understanding of both Christianity and other world religions, faiths and non-faiths
- Can show understanding, respect and kindness towards people of all religious beliefs, faiths and non-faiths.
- Can show understanding of how religions, belief and practices impact on people's lives, their actions and modern society.
- Can consider how their interest in local, national and world issues and their responses to such issues reflect Christian (and other religions') teachings.
- Are able to reflect on their own beliefs and explore and develop their own spirituality.

Opportunities to celebrate Religious Education at St George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery

There are various opportunities to celebrate Religious Education available at our school. These include but are not limited to:

- Visits to St George's Church as part of the RE curriculum i.e. to identify features of the church.
- School support at events at St George's Church i.e. Harvest Festival, Mothering Sunday, Christmas Carol Services, choir events.
- Visits from members of St George's Church to school to discuss their experiences and share their knowledge.
- Visits from members of other local faith communities.
- Visits to places of worship connected to religions other than Christianity and those from other denominations of Christianity.
- Provision of reflection areas around school which enable children to explore our school values and their own spirituality.

Ways to explore Spirituality in Religious Education

At St. George's Central CE Primary School and Nursery we believe that our curriculum should provide opportunities for children to develop a love of learning, so that they go on to make a positive difference to themselves, their community and the wider world. We have developed a definition of what we believe Spirituality is:

'Spirituality is...an understanding of how beliefs, values and experiences shape the identity of individuals, their spiritual disciplines and connections with life.'

In Religious Education, spirituality is explored through the use of Windows, Mirrors and Doors, enabling children to deepen their understanding of faith, belief and personal identity.

- **Windows** provide opportunities for children to look outwards and learn about the beliefs, values and experiences of others. Through the study of Christianity and world religions, pupils gain insight into how faith and worldview shape lives, communities and cultures, fostering respect, empathy and understanding.
- **Mirrors** allow children to reflect inwardly on their own beliefs, values, experiences and identity. Children are encouraged to consider how their learning in RE connects with their own lives, questions and experiences, supporting the development of personal spirituality and self-awareness.
- **Doors** create opportunities for children to respond, apply and act upon what they have learned. Children are encouraged to consider how religious teachings and values can influence behaviour, relationships and choices, inspiring compassion, responsibility and positive action within the school, local community and wider world.

Through this approach, Religious Education provides children with regular opportunities for reflection, questioning and personal response, enabling spirituality to be nurtured as an integral part of the Christian life of the school while valuing the diversity of beliefs and worldviews represented in society.

To make these concepts accessible and meaningful for pupils, both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have designated reflection areas and Nursery and Reception classes have a space for reflection within their classrooms. These spaces provide pupils with opportunities to pause, reflect on the school's values and respond to reflective questions, considering how these values are lived out in their own lives. The areas are also used to support PSHE learning, offering pupils a calm and supportive environment in which to recognise, explore and express their thoughts and feelings and spirituality.

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