

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY AT HOLY TRINITY & S. SILAS



Our Christian Vision:

At the heart of our school are high expectations and depth in faith that inspire us to grow, flourish and work together to achieve our full potential. It is our intention that we all develop our fullest sense of self, both individually and collectively.

Underpinned by our Christian verse, our three core values of care, courage and cooperation (The Three Cs) are at the heart of all that we do at school; in the relationships we build, the opportunities we create and the curriculum that we teach.

Our school is part of a vibrant and diverse local community, and this is reflected in our intake. We see this diversity as a great strength, and we prize opportunities to learn from each other. This reflects our Christian Vision, our Values and our sense of mission: all that we do as a school is deeply collaborative, with a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and qualities of character that enable people to flourish together, to 'spur one another on toward love and good deeds.'

We believe that working with drama, art, music and sporting specialists through whole-school projects, performances and competitions enhances our curriculum. These creative, cultural and sporting activities symbolise the holistic and inclusive view of education that runs through our school, with the development of the whole child, supported by the whole community, driving all that we do. Every aspect of school life aims to celebrate not just individual success, but the collective effort, achievement and flourishing of all.

We value the diversity of backgrounds and cultures which enrich our life and help our school become the unique place it is. The life of our school is integral to that of the Parish: we both contribute to our local community and benefit from it in our achievements.

At Holy Trinity and S. Silas we encourage children to be:

Caring citizens – who show care to each other, the local community and wider world; who know how their actions can help others.

Courageous communicators – who ask questions, speak knowledgeably, extend their vocabulary, take risks, learn from their mistakes and challenge themselves and each other through new experiences.

Cooperative learners – who work well together, negotiate and compromise, share ideas, listen to and encourage one another.

Background

Holy Trinity and St Silas School is a Church of England voluntary-aided primary school that offers a distinctly Christian education in an inclusive environment where we encourage all children and young people to grow, flourish and work as a team, to achieve our full potential.

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values which permeate and shape the life of the school and guide all of our actions. They are carefully woven into our Collective Worship and Religious Education which together form a deeply Christian school ethos. Children and staff of all faiths and none are welcome at our school and our aims are to promote understanding and tolerance between those of different faith traditions.

The position of a Church of England school such as ours was well phrased by Robert Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980-1991 when he stated that, 'Church schools should nourish Christians in their faith, encourage those of other faiths and challenge those of no faith'.

As a community, we have used our Christian vision and verse as a basis for our school values of care, courage and co-operation that are woven into the life of the school which we expect are exemplified by all members of the school community – pupils, staff, governors and clergy.

Aims

In teaching RE we follow the London Diocesan Board for Schools' syllabus which has the following overarching aims:

- To teach the children about Christianity and other major world faiths, and to foster an understanding of and sensitivity towards those with religious beliefs different from one's own
- To foster spiritual awareness by developing a sense of awe, wonder, mystery, joy and sorrow at the created world
- To develop the ability to think about questions of belief and value
- To give children the opportunities to learn about and learn from religion

Legal framework

It is a legal requirement that Religious Education be taught to all pupils. In voluntary-aided schools the Governing Body is responsible for the syllabus for RE. The Head Teacher and staff work with and under the direction of the Governors. It is the Governors' responsibility to ensure that RE is provided for all pupils in accordance with the Trust Deeds. Where these are missing, the Religious Education provided should be in harmony with the teachings and practices of the Church of England.

The law contains a "conscience clause" which gives parents the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education. This applies to both community and voluntary-aided schools.

RE and the school curriculum

RE flourishes in schools when it is given equal status with other subjects of the National Curriculum.

As a school we ensure the [Statement of Entitlement](#) for RE is fully met.

In voluntary-aided schools the time allocated to RE and the content is determined by the Governors. In law, RE is a fundamental entitlement of all pupils and should therefore be given its place as part of the basic curriculum.

We have agreed a set of principles as a staff body that outline the place of RE in the curriculum and its importance:

- We believe that Religious Education allows us to ask big questions where there is not necessarily a 'right' or 'wrong' answer.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to explore values and morals that we and others hold.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to explore other cultures and beliefs whilst developing acceptance and tolerance of difference.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to learn from other people's beliefs and practices.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to deepen faith in God.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to experience awe and wonder at ourselves, the world and the universe.

Status of RE at Holy Trinity & St Silas School

RE is an important subject at our school and has a core subject status and high profile within our curriculum.

A minimum of 5% (and at times closer to 10%) of our curriculum time is dedicated to RE teaching and learning as follows:

Professional responsibility

Teachers should be honest about their own ideas and at the same time ensure that they understand what their role is in the teaching of RE. All new staff are made clear as to the Christian foundation of our school and that when becoming part of a Church of England school, they must uphold the aims and ethos of the school, and implement the RE and Worship policies. Support is provided by the RE leader and through LDBS advice for those teachers needing help with the planning and delivery of RE. Children should be helped to gain confidence in asking questions, seeking answers and reflecting on their own experiences.

Curriculum and Planning

In line with the Church of England's RE Statement of Entitlement and reflecting the school's trust deed, Christianity is the majority study within our scheme of work and comprises at least half of our teaching and learning. The Governing Body of Christ Church School has adopted the London Diocesan Boards for Schools (LDBS) RE syllabus, making minor additions and amendments to reflect our context and local need. The LDBS syllabus is based around exploring 'Big Questions'. There will be a balance of learning about religion and learning from religion.

Teachers edit and adapt the LDBS planning accordingly, clearly stating their learning

intention and independent activities, ensuring that learning is captured in the Wonder Book as well as evidenced in their RE book.

Information about the LDBS RE syllabus (LDBS RE Policy, 2023)

The intent of the LDBS syllabus

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – in line with the Church of England’s vision for education

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 the school.
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools Statement of Entitlement.
- The Church of England’s vision for education for ‘life in all its fullness.’

Implementation of the LDBS syllabus

A high emphasis will be placed in all RE lessons on discussion, reflection and thinking skills. All children will be encouraged to contribute to class discussions

about the 'Big Questions' which form the learning intentions for each unit of work and lesson.

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

1. Enquire: Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, philosophy or human/social science.

2. 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

3. 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.

4. 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.

Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

Through play-based learning, story telling and a range of child-initiated, adult-directed and adult-led tasks, children in Reception class will begin to develop their understanding of their own and different beliefs, cultures and celebrations. By the end of Reception, in line with the EYFS early learning goals, our aim is that children will know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class (ELG: Understanding the World: People and Communities). Learning in RE will also support children's development in other areas of the EYFS framework including Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language.

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 one other world faith at an age-appropriate level. Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. 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.

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 Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life. We also want our children to have a solid

understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. 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 critically 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 and worldview 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 as a result of a rich and engaging RE curriculum.
- 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

Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching

At Holy Trinity & St Silas School we aim to provide a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum to all pupils, regardless of their gender, ethnic, social or religious background. All children, of different faiths and no faith, will have equal access to the RE curriculum and be encouraged to participate fully in lessons. All pupils will be given equal access to the RE curriculum, through effective adaptive teaching.

We recognise, through our adaptive 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.

Learning environment, resources and teaching methods

Teachers will ensure that an open, respectful and 'special' working atmosphere is created for RE lessons, where all views are valued and encouraged, where pupils can 'disagree well' with each other, ask their own questions and have time and space to reflect on their own and others' beliefs.

In line with all curriculum areas, a range of teaching methods will be used to engage, motivate, inform and teach. This may include using artefacts, images, drama, music, study of Biblical text, stories and whole class, group and individual work. We teach children how to handle artefacts with respect and care. Technology will be integrated into both the teaching and learning of RE wherever appropriate.

Visitors to the school, (including parents/family members of different faiths) and out of school visits (including to Christ Church, other local churches and other places of worship) are an important part of the teaching and learning. Teaching and learning will also draw on the experience of children and their families and encourage children to reflect on their own ideas.

Teachers, aided by teaching assistants, will record children's oral comments in class 'Wonder books', to reflect children's contributions to discussions and responses to each other.

Children will also be encouraged to record their learning and ideas in a range of different formats in their own RE books – writing, images, using technology, photographs, diagrams and records of drama and discussions. We use a range of recording because we are mindful that attainment and progress in RE may not mirror that in other subjects. Therefore, we seek to remove barriers which may inhibit a child who is working at the expected level or higher from sharing their valuable knowledge, thinking and discussion.

RE working walls will record the 'Big Questions' being studied in each class, as well as placing the topics in a Biblical timeline, where relevant. RE displays in the Church will also periodically share learning with the church community. There are many cross-curricular links to be made with the RE scheme of work and these will be encouraged and exploited wherever possible. Links will also be made with our school's Christian vision and values, our assemblies and collective worship

Wonder Books

Wonder Books are used in every classroom during every lesson to capture children's spiritual development through discussions and reflections based on any key questions posed. It is a method of capturing not only their discussion but also cross-curricular links too. The comments can then be used to support teacher assessment. In addition, it is enjoyable for the children to look back on their learning and reflect on some of the spiritual and reflective comments.

Assessment

Formative assessment is ongoing in all RE lessons through differentiated questioning. A summative assessment takes place at the end of every half-term. This includes a range of questions catering for 'expected' and 'exceeding' levels of attainment. These questions are based upon a key area of enquiry from the LDBS spreadsheet. At the end of every term, the teacher assesses a sample child as 'working towards 'expected' or 'exceeding'. The RE Leader is responsible for ensuring that these assessments have taken place and at the end of the year, a whole-school analysis of the data will be taken.

R.E. School Trips

Each class has at least one R.E. trip during the year.

Reception:

Trip to St Silas Church in groups

Diwali and Eid – Class teacher to organise with parents.

Year 1:

Trip to St Silas (whole class)

Jewish Visitor

Trip to local mosque

Year 2:

Visit to St Silas (whole class)

Trip to local synagogue: Muslim Visitor

Year 3:

Trip to Buddhist Temple

Visit to St Silas

Year 4:

Pilgrimage to Westminster Abbey

Trip to Neasden Temple

Visit to St Silas

Year 5:

Outing to Edgware convent

Trip to Gurdwara

Pilgrimage to Walsingham

Visit to St Silas

Year 6:

Pilgrimage to St. Alban's Abbey

Visit to St Silas

Additional Information

Our parish priest is a valuable resource, both for advice for teachers to support their planning of lessons and for supporting the delivery of RE lessons and taking children on visits to Holy Trinity and S. Silas Churches.

All Reception children are introduced to the Church as part of their induction to the school. S. Silas Church is visited by all children throughout the year and both

Churches are considered special places which children learn about through our RE lessons.