
Balderstone St. Leonard's Religious Education Policy

Reviewed September 2022

School Mission Statement



Our school is part of a strong and vibrant Christian community with a clear mission to inspire in our children a love of God, a love of each other and a love of learning.

Mission Statement for Religious Education

Religious Education at Balderstone St Leonard's Church of England School aims to give children a sound knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. It also aims to support children in developing their own values and attitudes through and exploration of shared human experience and the place and significance of Christianity and other religions in our world.

Fundamentals

Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together.

In our School the management of Religious Education is a distinctive role of the governors, Head teacher, and RE subject leader in discussion with all staff. RE is in accordance with the Trust Deed and is in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided in our school.

Religious Education and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another, they are managed separately although the head teacher, the deputy head and the subject leader meet regularly to discuss themes and ideas.

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Religious Education in our school lies at the very heart of the curriculum

- Governors have adopted the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE which reflects the National Framework for RE, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement and the requirements of SIAMS;
- We use Understanding Christianity published by the Church of England to complement our syllabus.
- **At least** 5% of curriculum time is devoted to RE although we try to use as many cross curricular opportunities as we can to look at the world as Christians. Our bespoke curriculum is designed to enrich our distinctiveness as a Christian school.
- Christianity plays a central role in RE: we study Christianity for 80% of curriculum time
- Appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is also included.

The Religious Education curriculum maintains a balanced approach of Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion

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.

Learning from Religion

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 in our school will help pupils 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;

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- 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.
- **RE in our school will also help pupils 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.

We are distinctive as a Church school

- Our vicar Karen Herschell is an integral part of our community and is regularly in school.
- We provide opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year;
- We study of the story of St. Leonard.
- We organise visits to places of worship, especially St Leonard's and Blackburn Cathedral, to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community;
- We welcome visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life.
- We have 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.
- We have received new Bibles for each member of school (Y2 upwards).
- We often listen to Christian psalms, hymns and spiritual songs from a wide variety of traditions;
- We use Christian artefacts with care, respect and confidence;
- Each classroom has a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection;
- We are proud to have two church school distinctiveness awards
- We are working on our Bishop's Award

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- We are officially an “Excellent” Church School (SIAMS inspection 2019).

Religious Education in our School enables:

- 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.

Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development.

Spiritual development within RE in our School enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment. We create “wow” moments where we can to marvel at the world around us. We try to study the world from a Christian perspective and think “What would Jesus do?”

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. We live by our mission statement – to love each other – and we use the Christian values to discuss disputes and behaviour. We are “rooted and grounded in love” (Ephesians 3:17).

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. We welcome all people of faith into our school and we have visited many places of worship both Christian and other faiths.

SEND, Resources, Assessment, Reporting and Recording

- Children of all abilities are planned for using adaptive teaching and support from teaching assistants.

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- Resources are managed by Nicola Draycott and are centrally located. Religious Education has a generous budget each year to buy new and update resources.
- The recording of children's progress in RE is a continual process.
- The teaching of RE in our school is judged to be high quality.
- Assessment is based on each teacher's judgement of the child's understanding formulated through discussion, observation and personal knowledge of the child. Teachers also use the RE ladder of expectation as an aid to assessment. RE is reported in the annual report alongside the other core subjects. The subject leader collects samples of work and assesses against the RE ladder of expectation in comparison with achievements in English to ensure standards are as high as other subjects.
- Provision is made for professional development of RE subject lead and other staff.

The Parental Rights of Withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School.

We wish our school to be a fully inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship (Non-statutory Guidance 2010).

The Worship and Religious Education provided by the 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 our school as a whole reflects the Church of England ethos, removal of pupils from Religious Education cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school.

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

Nicola Draycott RE Subject Leader
Victoria Gow Head teacher

September 2022