

NEWTON BLUECOAT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL



Shine from the inside out

Owner : Curriculum, Standards & Effectiveness Sub-committee

Approved by:

Chair of Governors

Head Teacher

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Religious Education Policy

Introduction

In accordance with our Trust Deed, “Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.” (Dated 08.08.1861)

Effective Religious Education (RE) is one of the most important factors in achieving our school vision. RE is rich, varied and inspiring, with the teaching of Christianity and the person of Jesus Christ at the heart. We are an inclusive community, placing high value on the need to learn about other religions and world views as well as the need to foster respect for all.

The aim of Religious Education (RE) at Newton Bluecoat CE is to enable all children to develop an understanding of, and respect for, world religions, faiths and worldviews. This enables them to develop religious literacy – the ability to participate in balanced, well-informed and respectful conversations about religion and belief.

As a Church of England school with a deeply Christian vision, our RE curriculum enables our pupils to develop an in-depth, mature understanding of Christianity and its relevance to their own lives.

Our strong RE curriculum is highly influential in the spiritual, moral, cultural, social and emotional development of pupils, making a significant contribution in preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. It strengthens our understanding of Christian values, empowering pupils make positive choices.

Teaching our core syllabus 'Questful RE' (developed by Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education), we aim to equip our children with the skills and knowledge to hold their own, informed conversations about faith and religion. Through this syllabus, we ensure the opportunity to develop a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, thus deepening children's understanding of the impact of religion on the world and enabling them to express personal views with consideration and confidence. We supplement Questful RE with Understanding Christianity, a resource developed by the Church of England Education Office. The key purpose of the Understanding Christianity project is to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. Units in Questful RE are paired with units from Understanding Christianity (see curriculum overviews below) to ensure our children receive a deep, rich RE education.

All classes have an RE lesson on a weekly which constitutes an hour of curriculum time. Wider opportunities for RE beyond the classroom include visits to church at least three times a year, visitors to school, themed days and visits to places of religious interest.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection. Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities.

80% of RE curriculum time is dedicated to learning about Christianity and a minimum of 20% to other faiths, as recommended by the Diocese of Blackburn.

Learning about other faiths and worldviews

We believe it essential that children develop an understanding of, and respect for, world religions, faiths, and worldviews, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of the world and its people.

Many units in Questful RE begin with an exploration of an aspect of Christianity before moving on to look at similar aspect of a different faith. As an example, when children in Year 1 learn about the Christian festival of Harvest, they also explore the Jewish festival of Sukkot. In the Year 1 unit 'Why is Baptism special?', children will also learn about special ways in which families of no faith might welcome a baby into the world. In the Year 5 unit 'Loss, death and Christian hope', we explore how humanists cope with loss and death. This ensures our pupils grow up to respect a range of worldviews and perspectives.

RE in the Early Years

In Reception, we follow the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Chatterbox units. These begin with the children opening a 'chatterbox' filled with objects and artefacts that prompt discussion, or 'chatter'.

At the start of the unit, the children will open the chatterbox together and discover what is inside. They take turns looking at and handling the objects. The conversation and questions will generate ideas for the learning activities. The children's ideas, comments, questions, work, pictures, writing and photos are recorded by the teacher.

Throughout the unit, learning activities are recorded in the class worship book. Everyone contributes either directly onto the pages or by sticking in paper, objects, photos or post-its. This book is the record of the RE that has taken place and, alongside observation, forms the basis of assessment in the Early Years.

The curriculum overview below shows all of the Chatterbox units covered in Reception.

RE curriculum overviews

These documents outline the units taught within RE lessons in each year group. Learning for older children builds on the concepts discussed in the Early Years and Key Stage 1. For example, the Year 5 unit 'How and why do Christians read the Bible?' further develops the knowledge and understanding developed in the Year 2 unit 'The Bible'.

The contribution of Religious Education to the school vision and values

In all that we do, we seek to pursue our deeply Christian vision: to equip children with the vision, passion and skills needed to transform society. Our vision – shine from the inside out (Matthew 5:16) – is all about transforming society. When we let our light shine, we let the light of Jesus radiate from within us to transform lives and communities around us. When we let our light shine, we shape society with the peace, joy and compassion of Jesus. When we let our light shine, we pursue love and unity. Our school values (love, friendship, forgiveness, thankfulness, compassion, community and hope) are woven within all parts of our curriculum.

We know that, if we are to be successful in the pursuit of our ambitious vision, we need to provide a values-based education. Effective Religious Education (RE) is one of the most important factors in achieving our school vision. RE is rich, varied and inspiring, with the teaching of Christianity and the person of Jesus Christ at the heart. We are an inclusive community, placing

high value on the need to learn about other religions and world views as well as the need to foster respect for all.

Content and Time Allocation

- Our school adopts the Blackburn Diocese of Education Syllabus for RE.
- At least 5% of the curriculum time is devoted to RE.
- The syllabus is incorporated into other areas of the curriculum, as appropriate.
- Christianity plays an important role, taking up to 80% of the time allocation.
- Appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views are selected from the 5 major world faiths, and account for 20% of the time allocation.

Our Religious Education curriculum

Our strong RE curriculum is highly influential in the spiritual, moral, cultural, social and emotional development of pupils, making a significant contribution in preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. It strengthens our understanding of Christian values, empowering pupils make positive choices. Teaching our core syllabus 'Questful RE' (developed by Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education), we aim to equip our children with the skills and knowledge to hold their own, informed conversations about faith and religion. Through this syllabus, we ensure the opportunity to develop a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, thus deepening children's understanding of the impact of religion on the world and enabling them to express personal views with consideration and confidence.

Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development

Pupils' discovery of themselves and of the wonder of the environment, is encouraged through Spiritual development within RE. Moral development allows the children to make decisions and build their lives based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. Social development also enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice. Within Cultural development, opportunities are provided which let the children develop an understanding of how Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith can impact on the lives of millions of people.

Studies of world faiths and other cultures are augmented by study units in our National Curriculum 2014 topics and by visits of adherents to these faiths, particularly during our multi faith and cultural weeks, or visits to places of worship.

Aims of Religious Education at Newton Bluecoat CE

The aim of Religious Education (RE) at Newton Bluecoat CE is to enable all children to develop an understanding of, and respect for, world religions, faiths and worldviews. This enables them to develop religious literacy – the ability to participate in balanced, well-informed and respectful conversations about religion and belief. As a Church of England school with a deeply Christian vision, our RE curriculum enables our pupils to develop an in-depth, mature understanding of Christianity and its relevance to their own lives.

By the end of Year 6, our pupils will:

- 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.
- Know and understand about other major world religions and worldviews, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.

- Have developed their own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

Assessment of RE

We assess pupil achievement in RE to ensure we are able to meet individual needs. The 'ladder of expectations' guides us in making assessment judgements.

The ladder uses symbols to indicate levels of achievement. The ladder is intended primarily to contribute to planning excellent tasks at the right level appropriate for the pupils' experience, knowledge and ability. However, the ladder can be used to make judgements about the level of individual pupils' achievement. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to be achieving at rung 2 of the ladder. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to be achieving at rung 4 of the ladder. Therefore, teachers can set appropriate tasks and make judgements as to whether or not pupils in their class are working at, towards or exceeding expectations of achievement.

Every half-term, at the end of units, teachers assess each pupil's overall achievement.

The 'end of key stage expectations map' (see below) set out the knowledge and understanding that pupils should have at the end of the key stage.

Respect for all and celebrating difference

Religious Education makes an important contribution to our Academy's duty to promote respect for all and to celebrate difference. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge all acts of discrimination or harassment (including racism and HBT bullying).

The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance, recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues. RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

Parental Rights of Withdrawal

The Worship and Religious Education provided by our school is in accordance with the Church of England. This foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and/or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school. If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Headteacher will explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation. It may be that only some elements are objected to.

Mrs E Robinson
Headteacher
RE Co-ordinator

Reviewed July 2023