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**Policy For Religious Education**

Our School Vision and Values

The children know these as the 3R’s:

‘Hand in hand together we will become ***resilient***, ***respectful***and ***responsible*** citizens of our community and the wider world.’

Bible references linked to our vision.

*Resilience* - I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

*Respect* - In your hearts, set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and **respect.** Peter 3:15

*Responsibility- Parable of the Talents Matthew 25: 14-30.*

## Rationale

Whittingham C of E Controlled Primary School aims to preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at or local Parish and Diocesan level.

We serve the 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 (the values of respect, responsibility and resilience are at the heart of all that we do) through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

Our school is distinctively different to non-Church schools, as a result of the importance placed on the social, emotional ( including mental health and well-being), moral and spiritual life of all members of the school community – pupils, teachers, governors and non-teaching staff. The careful planning and delivery of the R.E. curriculum, and the quality of the worship offered in school make a significant contribution to the all round development of everyone in our school community. Our relationships within school allow children to see themselves as being unique and special individuals. Such an understanding encourages children to relate one with another in a ***responsible*** and ***respectful*** manner.

**Our Aims:**

* to provide an open, secure and welcoming Christian environment for each pupil. This is expressed through daily worship which acknowledges the presence of God in our lives.

         To further develop and value the partnership that exists between school and the local churches, in particular, through sharing weekly worship and to encourage an appreciation of the Christian faith and a familiarity with the local Christian heritage.

         To care for each pupils’ safety, happiness and well being.

         To value our pupils as individuals, developing their ability to take responsibility for themselves and their actions, promoting confidence and self-esteem, and respect for others and their environment.

         To equip our pupils with the knowledge to make informed choices about having a safe and healthy lifestyle.

         To offer opportunities for our pupils to become involved in the daily life of the school and to prepare them to play an active role as citizens locally and in the wider world.

         To provide a learning environment, which is challenging and stimulating yet ordered and disciplined.

         To provide a broad and balanced curriculum, setting realistic targets for each pupil.

         To extend and reinforce our pupils learning, making expectations clear, and raising achievement levels.

Rationale

RE is regarded as a core curriculum subject at Whittingham C of E Primary School and it makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils and supports wider community cohesion. Due to the rural location of our children we understand our added responsibility to expose the children to a rich heritage of culture and diversity.

Religion and beliefs for many people form a crucial part of their culture and identity. Religion and beliefs inform our values and are reflected in what we say and how we behave. RE develops an individual’s knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of wider world.

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be a responsible citizen.

It can develop pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and world views.

RE contributes to pupils personal development and well-being and to British Values by promoting mutual respect and tolerance of others.

We believe that RE can also make an important contribution to other parts of the school curriculum such as citizenship, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education), History and Geography, education for sustainable development and many more. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others, individually, communally and cross-culturally.

#### Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which ‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life’. Learning about, and from, religions and beliefs through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief, and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society, helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding. Once again we are particularly aware of this being important in our rural location and catchment area.

#### Personal Development and Well-Being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become ***resilient*** learners, ***respectable*** individuals and ***responsible*** citizens of the wider world. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to value the importance of truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

#### Links with the Wider World

RE provides a key context to develop young people’s understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote an understanding of the wider world through:

* + **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 wider community of the North East of England.
	+ **the UK community** – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and beliefs 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 beliefs and their impact on world issues. Our work with Christian Aid and global neighbours program helps us here.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, to challenge stereotypes and to build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. These contribute to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

In summary, religious education for children and young people:

* + **provokes challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be a member of the wider world. It develops pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, encouraging personal reflection and spiritual development

**encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non- religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal and social values and to express their responses. This also builds ***resilience*** to anti-democratic or extremist narratives

* + **enables pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in the wider world
	+ **teaches pupils to develop *respect* for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
	+ **prompts pupils to consider their *responsibilities*** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.

## The Legal Basis of RE

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum, RE, RSE (new version June 2019) education and the National Curriculum. This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the Local Authority (LA) concerned. LAs must ensure that the agreed syllabus for their area is consistent with Section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996, which requires the syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

RE provision in Foundation and Voluntary-Controlled schools with a religious character is to be provided in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Whittingham C of E Primary School therefore follows the Northumberland’s Council’s most recently agreed syllabus.

## Provision of RE in the Curriculum

The legal requirements for the provision of RE in maintained schools do not specify any particular time allocation or how the curriculum should be organised. Using the Northumberland RE Syllabus we teach RE on a weekly basis from Year 1 to Year 6 which amounts to:

Key Stage 1: - 36 hours per year (minimum) Key Stage 2: - 45 hours per year (minimum)

We enhance the curriculum by teaching themed weeks such as those prior to Easter and Christmas and other world faiths.

While the statutory requirement for RE does not extend to children under compulsory school age, it forms a valuable part of the educational experience of children in the Early Years. The staff ensure RE contributes to:

* + personal, social and emotional development,
	+ communication, language and literacy,
	+ knowledge and understanding of the world,
	+ creative development.

## Teaching and Learning

The content and nature of Religious Education lends itself to an active approach which is multi- sensory. Pupils are given the opportunity to actively engage in the following ways:

Direct experience

* + Visits – places of worship and religious interest
	+ Visitors – invitations to members of a faith community or denomination to talk
	+ Events – media coverage of religious events showing the local, national and worldwide impact of religion
	+ Artefacts – aspects of living religion brought into the classroom for pupils to observe and consider

Sensory experiences and symbols

* + Seeing – posters, photographs, art, stained glass windows, videos, artefacts
	+ Hearing – religious sounds, music,
	+ Smelling – burning candles
	+ Touching – artefacts
	+ Tasting – festival food
	+ Music, dance, drama and role play
	+ Making – festival foods, cards, artefacts, displays, models
	+ Discussion – reporting interviews, giving views, responses, debates
	+ Writing – creative writing, an opinions board, reports, prayers, poetry, projects, posters
	+ Silence and reflection – periods of stillness, quiet, listening to others, describing feelings/ emotions, observing nature
	+ Information technology – research, presentation of work
	+ Literature – story, myths, legends, sacred writings, psalms, hymns and prayers
	+ The arts – expression of religious beliefs, feelings, emotions in religious paintings, icons, music
	+ Religious symbols – graphics, badges, flags, colours, gestures

Children will be encouraged to develop the following skills:

#### Investigation:

* + Asking relevant questions
	+ Knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information
	+ Knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religion
	+ The ability to ascertain facts

#### Interpretation:

* + The ability to draw meaning from artefacts, art, poetry and symbolism
	+ The ability to interpret religious language
	+ The ability to suggest meanings of religious texts

#### Evaluation:

* + The ability to debate issues of religious significance, with reference to evidence, factual information and argument
	+ Weighing the respective claims of self- interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience

#### Analysis:

* + Exercising critical and appreciative judgement in order to distinguish between belief, prejudice, superstition, opinion and fact
	+ Distinguishing between the features of different religions

#### Reflection:

* + The ability to think reflectively about feelings, relationships, experience, ultimate questions, beliefs and practices

#### Empathy:

* + Consideration of the thoughts, feelings, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and values of others
	+ Developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow
	+ The ability to see the world through the eyes of others and to see issues from their point of view

#### Expression:

* + The ability to explain concepts, rituals and practices
	+ Communicating the significance of religious symbols, technical terms and imagery
	+ Pursuing a line of enquiry or argument
	+ Express matters of deep concern and respond through a variety of media
	+ Give an informed opinion and express a personal viewpoint

## Inclusion

R.E. is provided for all children at Whittingham C of E Primary School and makes a valuable contribution to their education. Teachers plan work which takes into account the differences in the abilities of their pupils in order to maximise their potential and extend their abilities and to allow all children access to the R.E. curriculum. R.E. has a large part to play in helping to remove prejudice and misunderstanding and in combating stereotyping, discrimination, sexism and racism.

All pupils, irrespective of ability, age, gender or race are entitled to equal opportunity in the development of their religious education knowledge.

## Assessment

The school has developed the SIMS assessment system to include RE denoting the success criteria for all the RE units taught from Year 1 to Year 6. Teachers use these to inform their planning and day to day

assessments. Knowledge and skills are assessed in a variety of ways, and the children given appropriate feedback in order to make progress. Records are collated by the RE subject leader on a half termly basis.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken on a termly basis. Standards in RE are compared with other core subjects, particularly English, to ensure that standards are equally high in both areas. Monitoring and evaluation includes:

* Work scrutiny - collection of pupil books and other evidence to ensure curriculum coverage and high standards are maintained
* Learning walks, including governors, focussing on developments linked to the School improvement Plan.
* Pupil voice - gathering pupils’ opinions on the learning opportunities and their first-hand experience
* Informal feedback from parents (during Spring term and Parents Evening)

## Continued Professional Development

We have excellent links with the Newcastle and Durham Diocese Assistant Director Joe Warner who has trained staff and governors on a variety of topics most recently collective worship and SIAMS toolkit.

## Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from R.E. as in any school but it is hoped that the majority of parents choosing a Church Controlled School would adhere to the R.E. curriculum too.

Teachers and other staff in Church Controlled Schools have the safeguard of the 1944 Act Section 30 to withdraw from teaching R.E.

Parents wishing to withdraw their child from one aspect of RE, or the whole curriculum must request this by writing to the Headteacher on an annual basis, outlining their wishes.

## Arrangements For Complaints

As we always work closely with parents, consulting them at every stage, complaints about RE provision are extremely rare. However, should there be a concern, the following procedure should be followed in line with our complaints procedure:

* 1. Parents are encouraged to discuss the concern with the class teacher, together with the RE subject leader. (If the concern is not resolved at this stage proceed to 2).
	2. Parents make an appointment to discuss the concern with the Headteacher. The class teacher or RE subject leader may or may not be present. (Unresolved concerns move to 3).
	3. The matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Academy Council. A letter explaining the concern should be given to the school office addressed to the Acting Chair of Governors (Ruth Oldfield), Whittingham C of E Primary School.

Ratifed by Governors: Summer 2019