



# Aughton St. Michael's C.E. School

## RE Policy

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RE Lead: Emma Stone

Foundation Governors: Andrew Housley, Margaret Ellams and Janet Smith

### Mission Statement

**A**chieving all we can to develop fully our hearts and minds.

**S**haring in a loving, caring, Christian community.

**M**aking sure everyone is valued.



In line with the Church of England's vision 'life in all its fullness' we want to encourage everyone to excel and have a sense of personal worth, therefore the following message permeates in all we do;

***"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart"***  
and celebrate every step towards success that you make.

**Colossians 3: 23**

The strong Christian ethos of Aughton St Michael's ensures our children feel part of our school family, in which they matter. Whilst striving for academic excellence, we encourage our children to become confident, independent and resilient young people. We promote Christian values through our RE curriculum and within the school. We learn about honesty, compassion, doing your best, Koinonia, communicating effectively and resilience, through the example of Jesus and teachings in the Bible. By offering pupils positive encounters with the Christian faith we maintain that we are equipping them to be the person God wants them to be.

We recognise our children as individuals and educate them according to their rights in law. We provide opportunities for them to fulfil their potential and in accordance with the Church of England vision for Education to experience 'life in all its fullness'.

## **The context of RE**

The management of RE is a distinct responsibility of the governors, Head Teacher and RE subject leader. RE is taught in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school and according to the rites, practices, and doctrines of the Church of England. As a voluntary controlled school, Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus 'Searching for Meaning'. We enhance our learning and Christianity through the Liverpool Diocesan recommended Syllabus 'Questful RE.' These reflect the National Framework for RE and provide a balance of theology, philosophy and Human/Social Sciences as recommended by the Church of England. (Appendix A)

The curriculum is taught from Reception to Y6 and 5% of our timetable is devoted to RE. As in all Church of England schools, Christianity plays a key role and below the table shows how much of the curriculum time is dedicated to this in each Key Stage

**EYFS** 69% Christianity 31% other faiths

**KS1** - 64% Christianity 36% other faiths

**KS2** - 60% Christianity 40% other faiths

RE is a core subject and we believe that excellent RE teaching can be the key to enabling every child to flourish. We adopt an enquiry-based approach to give the pupils a sense of being on a quest of discovery about faith and Christianity. RE enables pupils to have informed conversations about religious beliefs and practices. Within lessons we use questions so that pupils can actively reflect, investigate and make meaning of relationships, the world and God. We want our pupils to be informed, confident and Questful.

## **Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1**

At Foundation Stage and Key Stage one R.E. should strive to build on young children's understanding of themselves and their experiences of family life and relationships. All pupils should learn that they are personally valued from the attitudes which they encounter in school. They should become increasingly aware of things which are special and important to themselves and other people. The children will sometimes benefit from opportunities to develop their awareness of the local environment through journeys and visits, and by having a chance to experience awe and wonderment in the natural world. They should be introduced to symbolism in religion and hear stories about the lives of key figures.

In Foundation Stage, the Chatterbox approach is adopted, this is a child centred, age-appropriate approach. Each unit begins with the exploration of a collection of objects in a box; a Chatterbox. The objects are carefully chosen to stimulate questions and discussion which lead the learning for the units.

## **Key Stage 2**

In Key Stage 2, the children should continue and build on the opportunities and experiences they have already encountered in Key Stage 1. They should be developing a

greater understanding of themselves and an awareness of the needs and feelings of other people from a variety of faiths and cultures. They should be given an opportunity to interact with the natural world and the local environment. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils should have been helped to explore a range of religious ideas and themes. They should have heard stories about the life and teaching of Jesus and other religious figures and have been given opportunities to consider their own questions and concerns.

The taught syllabus is not designed to convert pupils, or to promote a particular religion or religious belief. As a school we maintain that teaching about religions and worldviews should be sufficiently fair, balanced and open. We aim to promote mutual respect and understanding, whilst not undermining or ignoring the role of families and religious or belief organisations in transmitting values to successive generations.

**The aims of Religious Education in Church Schools are:**

- To enable pupils to 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.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office (Appendix B)

Appropriate to age at the end of their education in Church schools the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and, as a minimum, pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office (Appendix B)

This can be expressed in more detail and distinctively as:

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.

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 Church Schools should 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.

**Religious Education in Church Schools should 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.
- 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.

**Religious Education in Church Schools should enable:**

- 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.

## **SMSC Development**

Throughout Aughton St Michael's, RE contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. These aspects of development can be found in many of the school curriculum areas and are implicit in the ethos of the school.

**Spiritual development** enriches and encourages pupils' discovery of God the Creator and wonder of his work. We actively seek to nurture children's spirituality through the teaching of RE.

**Moral development** is based on the teachings of Jesus and offers pupils a secure foundation stone for their lives.

**Social development** enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where to love, accept and forgive one another is put into practice.

**Cultural development** provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a global faith and the impact this has on millions of people.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Religious Education is taught in accordance with our school's Equality Opportunity Policy. Stereotypes are avoided. Attempts are made to ensure that examples of religious figures reflect all aspects of diversity within society.

Pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

## **Pupil Progress and Assessment**

By using the Lancashire Syllabus, we can provide both continuity and progression for the children across all strands of R.E and across both key stages.

Assessments will be completed at the end of each unit and each term the RE coordinator monitors progress and attainment across the school. Evidence of the work done in R.E. will be found in the children's individual R.E. books, class RE floor books, on wall displays, in collective worship, and in the ways both children and adults treat and respect each other.

## **Differentiation of work and SEN Provision**

We endeavour to provide a differentiated approach to learning which treats pupils as individuals. This will be provided through:

- The delivery of carefully structured teaching approaches; this will be evident in the teacher's short-term planning.
  - Imaginative learning experiences which arouse and sustain children's interest, and which encourage a variety of responses.
  - Provision of appropriate resources e.g. simplified challenges for recording written work, or pictures to use as stimulus.
  - Teacher's response and questioning.
  - Adaptation of curriculum to enable all pupils to access the RE curriculum according to need.

## **Monitoring & Evaluation**

Standard self-evaluation procedures are used to monitor and evaluate pupil achievement, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of curriculum provision in Religious Education.

The subject leader will maintain a clear overview of the intent, implementation and impact of Religious Education through planned monitoring tasks included with the school's overall monitoring schedule. This might involve reporting to SLT and Governors to support their evaluation and contributing to the school's 'self-evaluation' in preparation for the next Ofsted inspection.

It is the statutory duty of the governing body to ensure that:

- Religious Education is included in the basic curriculum and that the school meets its statutory duties.
- Sufficient time and resources are devoted to Religious Education to provide a curriculum of quality.

## **Visitors and visits to places of worship**

We enrich the curriculum by organising visits to places of worship in the vicinity of the school. Faith leaders and other members of the community are also invited when appropriate to contribute to learning in the classroom as an additional valued resource. The RE subject leader supports class teachers to organise these educational visits.

## **Withdrawal**

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from Religious Education and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff.

Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher, any questions from parents about withdrawals. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

# Key principles of a balanced curriculum in RE

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## Summary

There is now a general consensus that the purpose of RE is about religious literacy. In relation to this we are defining this more specifically as:

Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.

In order to fulfil this purpose we are advocating that RE needs to provide a balance between three disciplines. These are:

- Theology
- Philosophy
- Human/Social Sciences

We envisage this is a means of structuring an RE curriculum in primary and secondary education that enables teachers to fulfil the stated purpose, i.e. to produce pupils who are religiously literate. This structure will provide the architectural plan within which a range of RE content, pedagogies and resources can develop religiously literate pupils.

## Theology

This is about believing. It looks at where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

Theology involves investigating key texts and traditions within different religions and belief systems, exploring the ways in which they have been used as authoritative for believers and the ways in which they have been challenged, interpreted and disregarded over time. It considers the use of reason in assessing the key ideas of a religion or belief system (thus crossing over with philosophy in places), as well as exploring the significance of experience on the claims made by religious and non-religious people. Theology enables children and young people to grapple with questions that have been raised by religions and beliefs over the centuries. Thus, we argue that everyone can have something to say about these ideas and concepts and that all can be theologians.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, *Subject Benchmark Statement: Theology and Religious Studies* (Gloucester: QAA, 2014).



## Philosophy

This is about thinking. It is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously the nature of reality, knowledge and existence.

For many thousands of years, human beings have asked questions about meaning and existence. Around the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE these questions began to be systematized in religious philosophies in different areas of the world. This is the starting point for the discipline of philosophy. It is this process of reasoning that lies at the heart of philosophy. Philosophy is less about coming up with answers to difficult questions and more about the process of how we try to answer them. It uses dialogue, discussion and debate to refine the way in which we think about the world and our place in it. Philosophy contains three fields of enquiry that would be applicable to a balanced framework for RE these are metaphysics, logic and moral philosophy. Metaphysics considers the nature of the world around us, logic investigates our process of reasoning (the way we think about ourselves and the world around us) and moral philosophy considers the nature of good and evil.

## Human/social sciences

This is about living. It explores the diverse ways in which people practise their beliefs. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

Engaging with the methodologies of the human/social sciences will help students investigate the ways in which religions, beliefs and religious believers have shaped and continue to shape societies around the world. They can promote better understanding of the ways in which religions and beliefs influence people's understanding of power, gender, compassion, and so on. The methodology includes listening to the voices and observing the practice of members of faith and belief communities. Considering both the strengths and weaknesses of religions and beliefs in their lived reality is a crucial element of helping pupils hold the balanced and informed conversations we hope for. It also enables pupils to consider the nature of religion itself and the diverse ways in which people understand the term 'religion'.

## A balanced curriculum, is like a three-legged stool

Conversations are often best had sitting down!  
Particularly the hard ones...! A three legged stool provides a useful analogy.

The easiest way to create balance is to have a three-legged chair or stool. Three legs provide a stable equilibrium because mathematically three points determine a plane. Holding the three disciplines in balance is key. One should not dominate the other.



Jane Chipperton, Gillian Georgiou,  
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**March 2018**



## Appendix B

### Religious Education in Church of England Schools

## A Statement of Entitlement

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

*Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.<sup>1</sup>*

A high-quality sequential religious education<sup>2</sup> (RE) programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews<sup>3</sup> fostering respect for others. In voluntary aided schools, RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed: this document will help schools interpret that legal requirement. In foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, RE

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<sup>1</sup> The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office, 2016), available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education>

<sup>2</sup> Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. The term religious education (RE) is therefore used throughout this document as it is connected to the Section 48 SIAMS inspection and, if and until the law changes we will need to continue to use the term. This does not stop individual schools, MATs or dioceses using other names including Religion and Worldviews for the subject.

<sup>3</sup> The term worldviews is used throughout the document to refer to a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an 'institutional' worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a 'personal' worldview for an individual's way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from one or many institutionalised worldviews. Based on Commission on Religious Education, *Religion and worldviews: The way forward A national plan for RE* (Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018) p4.

must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus for RE unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school. In academies and free schools RE must be taught in accordance with the funding agreement.

The effectiveness of denominational education in Church schools is evaluated during the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) section 48 inspection. That subsequent judgement will reflect the expectations set out in this document. The SIAMS evaluation schedule assesses the way RE contributes to the outworking of church school's Christian vision. It highlights the responsibility of Church school leaders to ensure that pupils flourish academically through the provision of high-quality RE. In addition, in voluntary aided schools, a judgement on standards in teaching and learning in RE is included in the SIAMS report.

### **The Entitlement: provision, profile and priority**

In a Church school the pupils and their families can expect an RE curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, this should include the ways in which it is unique and diverse. Parents can expect the use of high-quality resources, for example, the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils can expect that teaching and learning in Church schools will use an approach that engages with biblical text and theological ideas.

Pupils can expect that a Church school RE curriculum will engage and challenge them through an exploration of core concepts and questions. They can expect Church schools to provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews. There should be opportunities for them to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help form identity in a range of religions and worldviews. Pupils should explore how these may change in different times, places and cultures. RE will go beyond a sociological study of religious phenomena and will introduce pupils to a range of relevant disciplines including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences. In all Church schools progress in RE should be significant and attainment high enabling pupils to develop confident religious literacy.

Parents and pupils can expect that in a Church school RE will have a high profile within the curriculum and will be a priority for senior leaders. The RE curriculum is intrinsic to the outworking of a Church school's Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, the RE curriculum will contribute to British values and spiritual moral social and cultural development.

Learning activities must provide fully for the needs of all pupils. Pupils should develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Pupils should have a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They should have opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

### **Curriculum statement: challenging, accurate and diverse**

In all Church schools religious education must be considered an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. Pupils are entitled to a balanced RE curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews

through theology, philosophy and the human and the social sciences. It should be a coherent curriculum that enables progress through ordered and sequential learning developing both knowledge and skills. There should be a clear curriculum vision and intent, a structure for implementation and provision and a process for evaluating impact.

### **Aims and objectives**

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

### **Curriculum balance and time: sufficient, appropriate and balanced**

Reflecting the school's trust deed or academy funding agreement parents and pupils are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1-4.

All pupils in Church schools should follow a recognised and appropriate qualification or course in RE or Religious Studies at KS 4. This includes pupils who have SEND. The study of Christianity will be a significant part of any Religious Studies qualification offered.

The school must make it possible for those students who achieve suitable grades at GCSE or equivalent to follow appropriate A level courses. This should be in addition to the provision of core RE entitlement for all students at KS5 which should continue to develop student's understanding of Christianity and other religions and worldviews.

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

### **Developing staff expertise and knowledge: confidence specialism professionalism**

Pupils in Church schools are entitled to be taught by teachers who have a secure subject knowledge and are confident in helping them navigate and challenge cultural and religious stereotypes, prejudice and extremism. It should be a priority in Church schools to build up staff expertise in RE specifically, but not exclusively, working towards:

- at least one member of staff having RE qualifications or receiving specialist training.



- secondary schools employing specialist RE teachers and deploying them effectively to ensure pupils receive specialist teaching.
- all staff teaching RE having access to subject specific professional development.
- all staff teaching RE knowing how to create and maintain classrooms in which academic rigour is balanced with respect for different personal beliefs and identities.
- all teaching staff and governors understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.
- a governing body which is monitoring standards in RE effectively.

### **The role of the Diocesan Boards of Education**

One function of Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) is to promote, or assist in the promotion of, religious education in schools in the diocese. This should be fulfilled by monitoring the quality of religious education in Church schools through taking note of SIAMS inspection reports and by securing high quality training for all schools throughout the diocese. This will help ensure that the provision for religious education is effective and is able to fulfil the expectations of this statement.

### **Support for effective and excellent RE**

Teachers in Church schools belong to a wider educational and church community. They are entitled to expect positive support in providing effective and excellent religious education from:

- a named member of staff responsible for religious education and where that person is the headteacher someone who shadows the role
- their senior management team and their governing body, especially foundation governors or academy equivalents
- their local Diocesan Board of Education, including a school's adviser with an appropriate religious education background
- the Church of England Education Office
- local clergy and other ministers and Christian communities.

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