



Astbury St Mary's C of E Primary School

Walk in love as Christ loves you. Ephesians 5:2

Religious Education Policy

2024 - 2027

Approved by Governing Body: July 2024

Due for Review: July 2027



Our School Vision

Walk in love as Christ loves you (Ephesians 5:2)

Giving children a foundation to flourish and live fruitful lives.

Rooted in the security of love we grow in learning, character and courage to equip us for the great adventure of life.

In our Astbury family the first fruits of our character are our values of self control, peace and kindness. We learn and practise these to support all we seek to do together.

Statement of Intent

Our R.E. curriculum has been designed with the intention of enabling every child to flourish. Good quality R.E. has the potential to have the most powerful and lasting effect on a child's heart and mind. It is a subject that combines academic skills with the development of character and spirit. R.E. provides opportunities for spiritual development and personal reflection. It provokes challenging questions about meaning and purpose, truth and values, identity and belonging.

R.E. prepares children for citizenship in today's diverse society. It enables children to develop sensitivity towards and respect for others. It breaks down barriers and builds communities.

In order to deliver R.E. of the highest quality, reflective of our identity as a church school, we will endeavour to:

Create opportunities for the children to experience and recognise Christianity as a 'living faith' through: opportunities to explore the church's liturgical calendar; engaging in learning about the local Christian community; visits to places of worship, particularly to our Parish Church, Astbury St Mary's; welcoming visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life and regularly sharing acts of worship with our church's clergy and parishioners.

Provide a classroom environment in which: R.E. celebrates and supports the children's learning; there are religious books, appropriate for the age of the children; religious artefacts are used and handled with care and respect; there is clear evidence of the Christian nature of the school both visually and in an atmosphere of mutual respect, in which all persons are able to talk freely about their beliefs and practices.

Plan quality learning experiences that: take into account the differing learning needs of our children; help foster an enjoyment of and enthusiasm for the subject and ultimately allow all children, regardless of their faith background or otherwise, to progress in their understanding of Christianity and develop and grow on their personal spiritual journeys.

Support teachers on their own spiritual journeys, helping them to question, strengthen and develop their own spirituality, whilst having the confidence and knowledge to support the children in developing theirs.

The Importance of RE

RE in our School lies at the very heart of the curriculum. As a previously Voluntary Aided School the management of RE is a distinctive role of our Local Governing Body and Headteacher. It is delivered in accordance with our trust's deeds and within the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England. The Local Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education in this school.

We aim that the impact of RE should be visible in all areas of the curriculum and school life. RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian ethos of the school. We practise the belief that in our RE curriculum time, Christianity should occupy 70% and 30% will be devoted to non-Christian faith.

Curriculum/Syllabus

Our Governors adopted the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE, since October 2023, which fulfils all legal requirements and the RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office 2019. Our current RE syllabus is called 'Questful RE' which is in line with current best practice and pedagogical strategies.

By embracing the explicit teaching of Christian concepts and finding out where the concepts fit into God's big salvation story, it is hoped that the content of this syllabus will give pupils a deeper understanding of Christianity. In addition, pupils explore world faiths and discuss world views where appropriate.

Whoever we are, wherever we live, whether we are a person of faith or not, we all have a view on the world. Nobody stands nowhere.

On a quest to discover more about religion and world views pupils will discover more about themselves. As RE develops children's knowledge and understanding of the nature of religion and belief, it provokes challenging questions about meaning and purpose, truth and values, identity and belonging. Through the syllabus pupils will experience, explore and encounter a wide range of creative and challenging multisensory activities that will help them to discover the answers to fundamental questions such as these:

- Who am I and what does it mean to be me?
- In what ways do/can I relate to others?
- How/where can I encounter God?
- How can I make a positive contribution to the world in which I live?
- What values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are important to me?
- What does it mean to have faith?
- Who/what influences and inspires me?

Through an open investigative enquiry approach pupils will be given the sense of being on a quest of discovery. A key feature of the syllabus is the large number of questions included in each unit. The purpose of these questions is to give pupils opportunity to investigate, reflect, evaluate and make meaning. In doing so they will discover more about themselves, their relationships with others, their relationship with the world around them and their relationship with God. The questions set the route through the curriculum content.

The curriculum content is a balance of the three essential disciplines of quality RE: Theology, Philosophy and Social Science. This means pupils will look at concepts through a theological lens, exploring what people of faith believe. Alongside this pupils will explore questions and answers raised in relation to the lived reality and impact of religion and world views on people's lives. They will also think like philosophers, and be equipped with the skills that will enable them to make sense of life's experiences.

Although RE and Collective Worship naturally complement and enrich each other, they are delivered and managed separately (please see separate collective worship policy).

Time allocation for RE

Our Governors have agreed that *at least* 5% of curriculum time should be devoted to RE. This equates to approximately one hour each week. However, across the course of a unit, weekly R.E. sessions may be longer or shorter than this, allowing for a mixture of learning activities and outcomes, and taking into account the age of the children.

The aims of Religious Education in our school is:

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.
(*RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2019*).

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 all 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 2019*)

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.

Aims for RE

In Astbury St Mary's School we hope that Religious Education will help pupils to:

Learn about all 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.

It will also help pupils at Astbury St Mary's 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.

At Astbury St Mary's, Religious Education should enable:

pupils 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 all 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.

RE and its significant contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development:

Spiritual development within RE in our Church School enriches and encourages the pupils' spirituality; discovery of God the creator and of the wonder of the environment.

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.

Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live as Jesus' commanded - to love one another is put into practice in our community.

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.

Equal opportunities

Our children, irrespective of ability, race or gender, are given full access to the RE schemes of work. The use of adaptive teaching techniques allows children to respond to the work presented to them at the appropriate level.

SEN / Inclusion and the RE Curriculum

In planning RE lessons teachers should take account of three principles of inclusion:

Setting suitable learning challenges

Responding to the diverse learning needs of pupils

Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of pupils.

We will therefore endeavour to provide a responsive approach to learning. This will be achieved through:

The delivery of carefully structured teaching approaches

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

Teachers response and questioning

Adaptation of the curriculum to enable all pupils to access the RE curriculum according to need.

Resources:

Many resources for RE are found in the environment and in other areas of the curriculum within school. We have appropriate topic related resources which are specific to RE throughout school. We also use the Blackburn Diocese RE Syllabus resource materials.

Pupil Progress and Assessment:

By using the syllabus provided by Blackburn Diocese, we will provide both continuity and progression for the children across all strands of RE and across both key stages. Although subjects such as Christmas and Easter may be visited many times during a child's time in school, each time a different approach will be used, and a slightly different area covered, so that progression can be seen in the quality and depth of learning. Evidence of the work done in RE will be found in the children's RE books, class scrap books, on wall displays, in collective worship and in the way both children and adults treat and respect each other.

Teachers will review pupil's individual progress informally during all lessons and more formally when looking at the evidence gathered over a term. Assessing and reviewing is a continual process which will influence the teacher's planning for the whole class and individual children. We will report attainment and effort in RE to parents at the end of each year in the annual report to parents for each individual child.

The Contribution of RE to Christian Values

The Church of England RE Statement of Entitlements notes:

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.

Astbury St Mary's Primary School is committed to serving its community. It recognises the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever-changing nature of the United Kingdom. We also understand the vital role that we have in ensuring that groups or individuals within the school are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them.

We follow equal opportunities guidance ensuring that there will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political opinion.

Alongside our Core Christian Values, Christ Church is dedicated to preparing our children for their adult life beyond our school setting and ensuring that we promote and reinforce British Values to all our pupils. Our RE Curriculum supports teaching in this area.

RE and Parental Rights of withdrawal

Parents wishing to remove their child from religious education at Astbury St Mary's should initially speak to the Headteacher who will seek to explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an agreement. It may be that only some elements of Religious Education are objected to.