

Religious Education at St Cleopas

Religious Education Policy



Our School Vision is inspired by this bible verse:

John 13:34 "As I have loved you, so you must love one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples".

St Cleopas is an inclusive community that nurtures and develops opportunities for lifelong learning on our journey walking alongside Jesus, opening our eyes and hearts to all.

Our School Values: At St Cleopas, we aim to develop all pupils so that they achieve and succeed. This happens in a caring, welcoming and loving environment based firmly on our Christian values:

Friendship – Respect – Joy – Compassion – Forgiveness – Courage

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1. Aims and Objectives

At St Cleopas Primary School, we encourage children to deepen their understanding of the Christian faith and to value the Church as a 'family'. Religious Education (R.E.) enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. We develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and address these questions concerning the beliefs of the Christian faith. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

Our objectives in the teaching of R.E. are, for all of our children:

- To develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions.
- To develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition.
- To have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society.
- To develop their investigative and research skills, to hold reasoned opinions on religious issues.
- To be capable of reflecting on their own experiences, and of developing a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.
- To develop an understanding of religious traditions, and an appreciation of cultural differences in the UK today.

Respect for the great world faiths is fostered in R.E. within St Cleopas. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other faiths which is consistent with the school's loyalty to its Christian foundation.

Therefore R.E. at St Cleopas School helps pupils to:

- Learn about other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and from other faiths through encounters and dialogue.
- Recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God.
- Recognises areas of common belief and practice between different faiths.
- Enrich and expand their understanding while remaining faithful to their own traditions.
- Enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions.
- Recognise the common human quest for justice, peace and love and the common goal of the survival of life on this planet.

We therefore include the following distinctive content of the RE Curriculum:

- Opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year
- Opportunities to explore Global Christianity – exploring how different countries celebrate important dates within the church calendar.
- Visits to places of worship, especially the local parish Church and the Cathedral, to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community.
- Welcome visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life.
- Support for the pupils; confident use of religious language.
- Access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence.
- Encouragement of mutual respect, based on Christian values, where pupils and teachers can talk openly and freely about their own 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 and other faith families to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to be encouraged and grow in their faith.
- Pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the place of doubt and certainty in a maturing faith.

At St Cleopas, religious education makes significant contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

- Spiritual development within R.E. enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' 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 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.

2. The Legal Position of Religious Education

A high-quality sequential religious education programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state-funded 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 fostering respect for others. In voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus or in accordance with the trust deed of the school.

As a voluntary controlled school, high priority is placed upon R.E. reflecting the church background and meeting the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the Reception class who are less than five years old. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the teaching of RE with regards to their child, with the Headteacher or RE lead. The ERA allows parents and carers to withdraw their child from R.E. classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach Religious Education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The Religious Education Curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. Our school R.E. curriculum, following the advice from the diocese, is based on the Blackburn Diocese Religious Education Syllabus – Questful RE and meets all the requirements set out in the document. The ERA states that the R.E. syllabus should reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take into account the teachings and practice of other major religions.

The effectiveness of denominational education in Church schools is evaluated during the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) section 48 inspection. 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.

3. SEND and Inclusion

At our school, we teach R.E. to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a relevant, broad and balanced education to all children. Through our R.E. teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs and Disability, English as an Additional Language (EAL), Worship and Inclusion Policies.

4. Assessment

It is usual for any person embarking upon a journey to have a map. Across all of our curriculum units at St Cleopas, children use a concept map to record their learning and discoveries as they journey through. This question and concept map is a key tool for assessment, linking lesson content, questions and outcomes within units. They provide strong evidence of knowledge and understanding of prior knowledge, allowing children to reflect on previously taught content and make connections and comparisons. It also serves as a post-assessment task, clearly showing the progress in knowledge and skills gained across a taught unit.

Teachers assess learning in Religious Education at the end of each unit against the Blackburn Diocese ladder of expectation. This is intended primarily to contribute to planning excellent tasks at the right level appropriate for the pupils' experience, knowledge and ability. If the right tasks are set then the outcomes will be achieved. However, the ladder can be used to make judgments about the level of individual pupils' achievement. There are no specific assessment tasks as every task, potentially, can be assessed and contribute to the expected achievements.

The intended impact of the RE Curriculum is that the majority of children in each year group are working at or above the expected level for their age. We monitor the impact of our curriculum through deep dives, pupil voice exercises, work scrutiny and teaching and learning observations.

5. Marking

Assessment, marking and feedback will reflect each child's understanding of the key questions within each unit.

6. Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE units. We keep resources for RE in a shared area, where they are clearly labelled. These include books, bibles, teaching materials, lesson ideas and artefacts from the major world religions and world views as well as a full collection of Godly Play resources which we use to enrich teaching in R.E. The school library has a good supply of R.E. topic books and there is computer software to support the children's individual research.

6. Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject.
- Use specially allocated management time to review evidence of the children's work, and observe RE lessons across the school.
- Quality of teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated by the head teacher, SLT and RE subject lead as part of the school's agreed cycle of lesson observations.

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