

Last reviewed: February 2023

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St. Laurence's C. E. Primary School

Religious Education Policy



St Laurence's C of E Primary School is based on strong Christian foundations. It follows the teachings of Jesus and His promise of 'life in all its fullness' for everyone (Church of England Vision for Education). We know that every child matters so we aim to provide a happy, caring, family environment where each child's uniqueness is valued and the children feel inspired. Belonging to a safe and nurturing community, founded on strong Christian values, children will flourish and develop a variety of skills that will equip them to meet the challenges of our ever changing world and to make their own positive contribution to our global society.

Introduction

As a church school we believe that the main purpose of the teaching of RE is to contribute educationally, emotionally and spiritually to the development of our pupils as individuals. Our Christian vision states that we strive to reflect the love of God, the love of life and the love of learning together in all that we do. Although we are committed to teaching through the values of our Christian foundations and acknowledge that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, we study the teaching and practices of the other principle religions. Through this we aim to foster a growing understanding of the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and religious practices of humankind, promoting a positive and inclusive school.

Core Christian Values

The teaching of Religious Education is set in the context of our core Christian values each of which has a secure root in biblical teaching.

Trust – This value is at the heart of everything we do at St. Laurence's. In our community we believe in embracing trust and embracing the need to be trustworthy; aiming for everyone to feel safe and valued. We feel that trust must be earned, underpinning learning through behaviour. RE provides the opportunity to foster an atmosphere of trust so that people can share, learn, work and live together in confidence and at peace, developing respect for other people and the world around them.

Wisdom – Wisdom is insight into the way life works; an understanding of the consequences of our thoughts, words and actions and an awareness of the true value of things. At St. Laurence's we want our children to be wise. Our community joins together to make the right choices, to reflect on our learning and to learn from our mistakes. RE allows us to learn from the wisdom of the world faiths, rooted in reverence for God who they believe is the source of all life and values. Children will gain knowledge and know how to use it well.

Creativity – Christians believe that life is a 'gift', given to them by their loving God. Each person has a creative spirit within them which allows them to value and explore, celebrate and enjoy this world in

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all its mystery and diversity. With this gift comes a responsibility to make sure that creation is not spoiled but cared for and shared by all. During RE lessons children will explore the world in which they live and use their imagination, thinking and confidence. They are provided with an environment where they can strive for self-belief so that they can fully develop their talents through original thinking and reach their full potential.

Rationale and Aims

RE contributes strongly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of each child. The National Framework for RE states that:

‘RE encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses’.

At St Laurence’s we believe that personal choices of faith and lifestyle can only be made on an informed basis.

Through RE at St. Laurence’s we aim to promote our integral school ethos and vision by:-

- Provoking challenging questions - enabling the children in our school to become more reflective about the purpose and meaning of life.
- Fostering the children’s ability to express themselves articulately and confidently – promoting speaking and listening skills.
- Encouraging the desire for wisdom – nurturing the children’s skills and creativity.
- Developing a sense of identity and belonging - helping the children to find their ‘place’ within the community.
- Encouraging respect for others by listening to ideas which may differ - including those who hold different religious beliefs.
- Strengthening capacity for making moral judgements and positive healthy choices.
- Helping children to become resilient, successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Learning about and from religious traditions helps pupils to appreciate which aspects of life have been significant for most of humanity throughout the ages. 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. It also helps to show them what shapes people’s behaviour and motivations, and points pupils towards positive models for their own lives. RE lessons particularly include opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually - ‘helping them to recognise and deepen their relationships with self, others, the planet and, for many, with God.’ (Jill Stolberg, Church of England, Birmingham) In addition, when appropriate, R.E. lessons offer spiritual moments for stillness, reflection and response.

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Time Allocation

RE is taught for 36 hours per year in Foundation Stage and KS1 and for 45 hours per year in KS2. This is either delivered over successive weeks or as a blocked unit, depending on the topic being taught. Cross-curricular links are encouraged and links are also made where possible with other areas of school life, for example Christian worship.

Planning

Currently, R.E. is taught in accordance with the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus and using the Church of England Education project resource 'Understanding Christianity'; taking into account the need to offer breadth of content. These are supplemented with and supported by other ideas and resources as appropriate. The syllabus is based on a teaching and learning approach which has three core elements:

- Making sense of beliefs
- Making connections
- Understanding the impact

This structure allows pupils to encounter diverse religious traditions alongside non-religious worldviews. There is a unit of work at the end of each year group where the similarities and differences between religions can be explored (see the long term plan).

Although we identify the religion(s) that will be focussed on during each key stage, this does not prevent reference being made to other religions and secular world views when appropriate.

- In EYFS children will study Christianity and Religious experiences represented in the class or school.
- In KS1 children will study Christianity and Islam and Judaism.
- In KS2 children will study Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.

Disciplinary and Substantive Concepts

Disciplinary concepts have been chosen to allow the understanding of RE through the use of knowledge of principles, theories and processes. Substantive concepts appear repeatedly through the RE units of work and across each year group which allows their understanding to be deepened over time.

Disciplinary Concepts	Substantive Concepts
Understanding beliefs and teachings	Creation
Understanding practices and lifestyles	Incarnation
Understanding how beliefs are conveyed	Salvation

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Reflecting Understanding values	Gospel God
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RE in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Much of the delivery of RE takes place largely within ‘Knowledge and Understanding of the World’ following the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum will provide opportunities for the children to

- develop awareness of their own views and feelings and be sensitive the views of others.
- find out about their own cultures and those of other people.
- develop geater awareness of their feelings when encountering the special and the precious, the ‘wow’ and the wonderful.
- explore some of the signs and symbols used in religious and everyday life.
- learn to listen, thank, say sorry, express appreciation and rejoice with others.
- become aware of what it means to trust and to be trusted, to be loved and valued and to feel secure in belonging.
- care for themselves and others.

Long Term Plan – Foundation Stage and KS1

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Foundation Stage	F4 Being Special: where do we belong?	F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians? (Incarnation)	F1 Why is the word ‘God’ so important to Christians? (Creation)	F3 Why is Easter special to Christians? (Salvation)	F5 What places are special and why? 	
	F6 What times/stories are special and why?					
Year 1	1.2 Who do Christians say made the world? Harvest (Creation)	1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Incarnation)	1.7 Who is Jewish and how do they live?		1.4 What is the ‘good news’ Christians believe Jesus brings? (Gospel)	1.9 How should we care for the world and for others, and why does it matter? (C, J, NR)

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Year 2	1.1 What do Christians believe God is like? (God)	1.10 What does it mean to belong to a faith community?	1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live?	1.5 Why does Easter matter to Christians? (Salvation)	1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live?	1.8 What makes some places sacred to believers? (C,M)
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Long Term Plan – Key Stage 2

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 3	L2.1 What do Christians learn from the Creation Story (Creation/Fall)	L2.2 What is it like for someone to follow God? (People of God)	L2.9 How do festivals and worship show what matters to a Muslim?	L2.10 How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people?	L2.4 What kind of world did Jesus want? (Gospel)	L2.12 How and why do people try to make the world a better place? (C,M/J,NR)
Year 4	L2.7 What do Hindu's believe God is like?	L2.3 What is the 'Trinity' and why is it important for Christians? (God/Incarnation)	L2.8 What does it mean to be Hindu in Britain today?	L2.5 Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'? (Salvation)	L2.6 For Christians, when Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost? (Kingdom of God)	L2.11 How and why do people mark the significant events of life? (C,H,NR)
Year 5	U2.1 What does it mean if Christians believe God is holy and loving (God)	U2.3 Why do Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah?	U2.8 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today? (Incarnation)	U2.9 Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?	U2.4 Christians and how to live: 'What would Jesus do?' (Gospel)	U2.10 What matters most to Humanists and Christians? (C,M/J,NR)
Year 6	U2.2 Creation and Science: conflicting or complementary? (Creation)	U2.11 Why do some people believe in God and some people not? (C,NR)	U2.7 Why do Hindu's want to be good?	U2.5 What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people? (Salvation)	U2.6 For Christians, what kind of king is Jesus? (Kingdom of God)	U2.12 How does faith help people when life gets hard? (C,H,J,M,NR)

Units are taken from the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus 2021

Understanding Christianity units are incorporated

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Equal Opportunities

Religious Education is offered to all pupils in accordance with the Shropshire Agreed Syllabus. This includes teaching Christianity and other major faiths and the school policy reflects this approach. As a Church of England School, we aim to provide a course of religious education within the framework of the Church's year, appropriate to the educational needs of children at different stages of development. We aim to help children understand the presence of Christian beliefs and values in our society and in the world and their biblical and historical significance. We wish to encourage the development of strong and harmonious links between school and church for the benefit of the community of St Laurence.

Special Educational Needs

Religious education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our Religious Education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. Religious Education is taught according to the ability of each individual and children with special educational needs will be given extra resources and support where needed.

All children will have equal access to the Religious Education curriculum and reference is made to ensure that health and safety, equal opportunity and special needs policies are met.

Gifted and Talented Pupils

At our school each class teacher will liaise with the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator to ensure individuals' needs are met and that appropriate targets are set and reviewed regularly. Class teachers are mindful of the extra needs of gifted and talented children and differentiate questions and activities to allow for further progression and challenge. We recognise that children can excel in RE even if their reading and writing skills are not at age related expectations, and we strive to ensure that they are able to demonstrate this in a range of ways.

Oracy and Key Vocabulary

Oracy plays a key role in the teaching and learning at our school. During RE lessons children are given the opportunity to develop the confidence and skills to listen and talk effectively by valuing different views and engaging in meaningful conversations. Carefully chosen vocabulary and questions ensure all children can fully participate and there is shared understanding that everyone's opinion should be valued.

Approaches

So that RE is made an active and lively subject the concepts for each year group are explored in a variety of ways and offer opportunities for individual expression. These include:-

- Discussion
- Storytelling
- Reading and written work
- Poetry
- Drama
- Art

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- Music
- ICT
- Use of artefacts and pictures
- Experiences - focus on different events in the Christian calendar, eg Advent, Easter, Pentecost.
- Visits by members of local churches
- Visits to places of worship

Church links

Whole school services are held in St. Laurence's Church, Ludlow each term with an open invitation to school, church and the local community to attend. We have regular visits from the clergy from St Laurence's Church and members from a variety of Ludlow Churches are involved in our Collective Worship on a fortnightly basis. We also have strong links with Imam Sohaib from the mosque in Craven Arms. Rev. Lawrence Gittins is a Foundation Governor.

Assessment and Monitoring standards of teaching and learning in RE

Class teachers will use the 'RE Assessing Pupils Progress Assessment Guidelines'. Assessment in RE will focus on the development of the pupils understanding about religion and their evaluative responses regarding their own and other children's religious experiences. Assessment will be made by observation during discussion, art, drama and responses to oral and written work. Attainment of the children will be recorded onto attainment sheets where progress throughout the year can be monitored.

The co-ordinator will monitor RE within the school through analysis of assessment data, lesson observations, work sampling and pupil interviews. Evidence of planning and work, some of which may be photographic, is gathered and stored in the RE co-ordinators file.

Role of Head Teacher and Governors

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher ensure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the R.E. curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in R.E. and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching R.E. are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for C.P.D.
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support R.E. learning objectives
- clear information is provided for parents on the R.E. curriculum and the right to withdraw

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- R.E. is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations for R.E. and pupils can make good progress.
- pupils receive their entitlement to R.E.

Role of the Co-ordinator

The R.E. Co-ordinator who engages with the Shropshire L.E.A. and Hereford Church of England Diocese for continuing professional development and training. The Co-ordinator has responsibility for R.E. resources and the purchase of resources within agreed budgets. The Coordinator will try to support colleagues who are planning R.E. activities. They keep staff informed of any new changes or developments. They will review the policy in line with the Whole School Development Plan, and after discussion with colleagues decide targets for the future. They will collect evidence of work and planning from all Key Stages.

Resources

We have a wide selection of children's Bibles and books which are kept in the school library. Teacher's resource materials are stored in the office area. There is a box of resources for each of the world's major religions which are kept in the KS1 area. We also have access to the Ludlow Mascall Centre library which offers books, DVDs, CDs, posters, artefacts, Godly Play and more items on all aspects of Christianity and the world's major religions.

Quiet, interactive areas for stillness, reflection and response are designated in each classroom. These intend to foster a sense of awe and wonder and to enable children's spiritual awareness to be deepened through reflection, whilst they learn to explore, understand, respect diversity in faith, beliefs and traditions. The area may include prayer books, bibles, a prayer chair, prayer books/ boxes, thought books, inspirational verses/pictures.

The Legal Position and the right to withdraw from RE

RE must be provided to every registered child from Reception to Year 6. It sits alongside the National Curriculum and has equal status to a core subject. The 1988 Education Reform Act requires all syllabuses must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking into account the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.

By law parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the RE curriculum but the school continues to be responsible for the supervision of the child. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum if, for example, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils, or there are any issues related to religion that arise in other subjects.

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We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns about the policy, provision and practise of RE here at St. Laurence's CE Primary School.