



St Nicolas C of E Academy

Together We Flourish

*Religious Education
Policy*

Written: Summer 2023



St Nicolas C of E Religious Education Policy

Vision and Values

Our vision as a Church of England primary school, deeply rooted in a strong Christian tradition, is to develop happy, young people with enquiring minds, a spirit of curiosity, respect for themselves, others and the environment so that they will have the skills, resilience and adaptability to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Our vision draws inspiration from the Parable of the Sower which is found in the gospel of Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 in the New Testament.

A farmer sows seed in a field:

- Some seed falls on the paths, and the birds quickly eat it.
- Some seed falls where there are rocks, and not much soil. Plants grow quickly, but soon the sun dries them. There is not enough soil, and the plants die.
- Some seed begins to grow in a place where there are too many weeds. The weeds stop the growth of the plants, and the plants die.
- But some seeds fall on rich soil. So, the plants flourish.

We strive to provide the rich soil that enables our children and adults to develop the deep roots that they need to flourish in the love and grace of God. Within our community, our Christian school nurtures growth and supports all to have the courage to face challenge and the resilience to persevere even when confronted by difficulties. We endeavour to provide abundant opportunities which provide a platform for unique strengths and talents to blossom, where everyone feels valued and has respect for themselves and others, and hope for the brightest future.

Our mission, as a school with a religious character, is to provide an education of depth and quality in a Christian ethos which ensures the children and adults have the nurturing and aspirational environment to reach their full potential.

To realise our mission, we endeavour to live out our vision through our school motto:

Together We Flourish

Christian Values are interwoven through our vision, mission and motto and are embedded throughout the curriculum with a particular focus given to:

- Love (Compassion and Friendship)
- Peace
- Thankfulness
- Perseverance
- Service
- Hope

Our one school rule of respect ensures everyone feels valued and is the lens through which all our values are viewed.

Equalities Statement

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Aims and Objectives

St Nicolas C of E Academy belongs to a family of academies which are all part of the Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust. The Trust's core mission is to build a better future for all with our academies who in turn will positively impact their communities. Each academy is an inclusive environment supporting pupils from all faiths and none, reflecting the communities of each academy.

Our aim at St Nicolas C of E Academy is to provide a happy, stimulating, safe and secure environment which develops caring and confident children with enquiring minds. At the heart of our school lies an education of depth and quality in a Christian environment, where children will develop a lifelong love of learning.

We want St Nicolas C of E Academy to be recognised as a place where every member of the school community strives to become an independent learner. As a school, we aim to meet children's educational, physical, spiritual and creative needs, and foster self-respect, initiative, consideration for others and a thirst for knowledge. We hold fast to our Christian values and believe that every one of us is special in God's sight.

Legal Requirements

Religious education is a statutory subject for all pupils as it is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum. In the UK, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education (section 71 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998).

At St Nicolas, we consider it good practice to talk to parents to ensure that they fully understand the aims and principles of RE to inform their decision, however, as a C of E school with a strong Christian foundation we necessitate that those families who have chosen to send their children to our school uphold and are respectful of our Christian ethos which is explored directly during curriculum RE time.

By law each Local Authority is required to have a Locally Agreed Religious Education Syllabus with the establishment of a Statutory Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). Currently Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs work together in creating an RE curriculum that will promote 'good effective and thought provoking RE across the city and county.' (2017 – 2022).

RE is multi-faith. The curriculum drawn up by SACRE 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain.' The Religious Education curriculum we provide is based on the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 and Understanding Christianity.

Our Philosophy

At St Nicolas, we believe that RE is of fundamental importance in helping children to learn about the foundations of our Christian ethos that underpin all aspects of our church school life and of Christian values that are woven through all aspects of our curriculum. We strongly feel that our RE curriculum enables our children to gain a deep awareness of their own and others' unique identities as they grapple and explore life's big mysteries and the answers to 'big questions' that are presented through Christianity and by a wide variety of world religions and belief systems.

At St Nicolas, we believe that RE is intrinsic in helping children to understand what is of real value in the world today. Through RE, children can become literate and articulate about religion and beliefs in order to become caring members of society. The subject encourages children to demonstrate curiosity about faith and recognise how it impacts upon the lives of individuals, society and culture. Through RE, children reflect on their own beliefs and values in the light of their learning, in doing so their respect for themselves and others develops and they feel drawn to imagine and contribute towards a better world for all.

RE and British Values

As referenced in the 2017 – 22 SACRE we identify that RE plays a fundamental part in promoting British Values. Learning in RE will help our children to recognise that religions are committed to morality, social justice, a deepening of personal development and stewardship of the world. The children will explore British Values in relation to religions and belief, through studies of and visits to places of worship and meeting people from a diverse range of religious and belief societies. In doing so it is our aim that they will become better informed and empathetic, which will in turn promote cohesion and integration in society.

Aims (SACRE)

The curriculum aims of RE education are to ensure that all children:

- 1) Know about and understand a range of religions and world views so that they can:
 - Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals;
 - Identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and world views;
 - Appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- 2) Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews so they can:
 - Explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
 - Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
 - Appreciate and appraise various dimensions of religion.
- 3) Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religion and worldviews so that they can:
 - Find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
 - Enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;
 - Articulate beliefs, values and communities clearly in order to explain why they might be important in their own and other people's lives.

Aims (Understanding Christianity)

- 1) To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring key theological concepts;
- 2) To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians;
- 3) To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves, the world and human existence.

Objectives

The objectives of teaching RE in our school are to enable children to:

- Know and understand how spirituality and moral dimensions are woven into and developed through life experiences;
- Know and understand the beliefs, teachings, practices and values of the Christian faith;
- Know and understand how beliefs, teachings, practices and values of the Christian faith are comparable to and relate to those of other world faiths and views;
- Engage in first hand learning experiences that help them to understand what it means to be committed to a religion;
- Communicate in a range of ways their understanding of truth, belief, faith and ethics;
- Engage in creative approaches and practical work that enhance their understanding through the arts (music, dance, drama, art etc.);
- Demonstrate respect and empathy towards others and their points of view.

Curriculum and School Organisation

The Early Years Foundation Stage:

RE is taught as part of in the Early Years Foundation Stage but also contributes to a child's personal and social development and understanding of the world. RE is planned as an integral part of the themes covered during the year and developing an understanding of RE is linked to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which underpin curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Units from both SACRE and Understanding Christianity are taught discretely and opportunities are sought to use RE to reinforce learning in English, Art, Music, and Dance and the children's understanding of different faiths and cultures, increase a child's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Years 1-6:

Understanding Christianity and The Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed SACRE syllabus are taught throughout EYFS, Key Stage 1 and 2. RE is a legal entitlement and all pupils at St Nicolas engage with the minimum of what constitutes a weekly one hour RE lesson. RE is taught as a discrete subject but teachers are encouraged to plan with flexibility, seeking specific opportunities to make links to other subjects, including the arts, where it is felt that RE learning may be further enhanced. During special times of the year e.g. Christmas and Easter, further curriculum time may be utilised to deepen children's understanding.

Planning and Delivery

Units from Understanding Christianity and the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus form the basis of our planning at St Nicolas so that pupils will acquire knowledge and understanding of people that follow the six principal world religions: Christians, Muslims, Jewish people, Sikhs, Hindus and Buddhists, as well as Humanists and people of no faith.

Class teachers use the example resources provided by Understanding Christianity and Warwickshire SACRE as a basis for creating relevant, stimulating and creative learning opportunities for their pupils, ensuring that the principles and processes that support quality learning within a unit are not compromised.

The agreed syllabus covers key concepts and processes as the children:

- 1) Know about and understand a range of religions and world views.
- 2) Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religion and worldview.
- 3) Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religion and world view.

Understanding Christianity weaves approaches to teaching about Christianity that build upon the children's encounters with biblical concepts. Units of work address a key Christian concept through key questions and exploration of key biblical texts, the impact that they have on Christians and possible implications of the children themselves. Each unit incorporates the elements of:

- **Making Sense Of The Text:** Developing skills of interpretation; understanding how Christians interpret, handle and use biblical texts; making sense of meanings of texts for Christians.
- **Making Connections:** Examining different ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings, and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and in the world.
- **Understanding the Impact:** Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the texts and concepts studied and discerning possible connections between these and pupils own lives and ways of understanding the world.

Key Concepts and Processes

The main Christian concepts explored through UC are God, Creation/The Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation, Kingdom of God. The concepts fit into a spiral curriculum, whereby concepts are revisited and explored in more depth as pupils move through the school. These are explored through key questions and through connections to other concepts. Through a carefully planned amalgamation of both UC and SACRE the children's process of learning will focus on key questions linked to the areas of:

- **Believing:** Religious beliefs, teaching, sources; questions about meaning, purpose and truth.
- **Expressing:** Religious and spiritual forms of expression; questions about identity and diversity.
- **Living:** Religious practices and ways of living; questions about values and commitments.

At St Nicolas learning opportunities in RE will include the use of drama, art, poetry, music, design and technology, class and group discussion, as well as exploring different forms of communication and writing to fully engage and motivate all pupils.

Where ever possible first-hand learning experience should be planned into units of work through visits to sacred spaces or inviting visitors into school. (Teachers use the SACRE guidelines and access support from the RE Coordinator to ensure that protocol is adhered to and that such learning opportunities are fully utilised). Where such visits/events are not possible interactive web resources or role play opportunities should be utilised to present an authentic learning experience.

RE is ordinarily taught on a weekly basis, but, in accordance with best practice guidelines, in addition teachers will devise special events or focused RE days/weeks that enrich pupils' experiences and understanding. Wherever possible, RE learning will be linked to other curriculum areas or aspects of pupils' daily lives. Knowledge and understanding of the dispositions of: awe, grace, wonder, worship and respect are intrinsically woven through teaching and learning in RE. It is the role of the class teacher to support the children of St Nicolas in making specific links between these capacities and their learning, making them overt and recognisable for reflection and further development.

Assessment

Teachers will use end of unit learning outcome descriptions from Understanding Christianity and SACRE to make 'best fit' judgements on pupils' attainment of knowledge and their application and understanding of the matters, skills and processes specified in the unit. Pupils will be judged as either working towards age-related expectations, meeting age-related expectations or working in greater depth of age-related expectations.

It is important that learning in RE is transparent – that pupils are aware of their 'learning' and know how they can make specific progress. Wherever possible, pupils should be involved in the assessment of their work. Pupils' self-assessment and peer-assessment through reflective opportunities are strongly recommended.

Evaluation, Review and Revision

This policy was written in Summer 2023. It will be reviewed in three years' time or before, if it is felt appropriate. It was drawn up in consultation with, and reflects the consensus of opinion of, the Headteacher, members of the teaching staff and members of the Governing Body.

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