

Edenfield C of E Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Our school vision is:

Guided by God, following in his footsteps

Our vision is theologically centred on Psalm 119:105

'Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path'

The word of God is a light on our school pathway; it shows us how to follow the right way. Our pathway will open up horizons of hope and aspiration as we educate our children for wisdom, skills and knowledge and nurture their God given talent and individuality. We foster forgiveness and reconciliation so that all flourish and live well together, embracing difference and treating everyone with respect in our school and church community, and the wider world.

Core Values are:

Love

Faith

Joy

Hope

Forgiveness

Respect

The above are implicit within the daily life at Edenfield CE School but are also displayed explicitly within school.

Introduction

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes:

"... a major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument, and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world". (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013)

As a Church school, the management of RE is central. The Manchester Diocese Syllabus (Revised 2024) is followed. The school also uses the 'Understanding Christianity' project to enhance the syllabus. This is a substantial resource to support the teaching of Christianity in Religious Education.

The key purpose of this project is to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. The school also ensure that the Lancashire local authority syllabus is available for parents.

This policy reflects the school's agreed values and philosophy with regard to Religious Education. It illustrates how RE is taught within the school and gives guidance on planning and assessment. The policy has been produced after discussion with governors and members of staff and will be reviewed at least every two years.

The policy is available to all staff, governors, parents and carers, advisers and inspectors.

Entitlement

RE in a church school such as Edenfield, lies at the very heart of the curriculum. The school follows the Manchester Diocese Syllabus (this is their newest syllabus) which we implemented fully in September 2024) which reflects the National Statement of Entitlement published by the Church of England Education Office. An allocation of 5% a week of the available timetable (approximately one hour) is made for RE, plus opportunities to engage in collective worship on a daily basis.

Christianity plays a central role in RE, taking up 50% of the annual plan with world faiths making up the remaining 50% (Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism). World views are also included in the syllabus. At our school, we have an annual RE Week, in addition to weekly lessons, whereby each class focuses on a different religion. This is to ensure that all of the main world faiths are celebrated by our pupils. RE week includes visits to other religious places of worship, visitors from other world faiths coming in to school, dance, sampling foods, art and other creative and practical ways of studying different religions.

The time allocated to RE in school is independent of time allocated to Collective Worship. Although RE and Collective Worship naturally complement and enrich each other, Collective Worship is a separate statutory requirement and not covered by this policy (See Collective Worship Policy).

Aims:

At Edenfield, it is believed that RE should help children to:

- Think theologically and explore the great questions of life and death, meaning and purpose
- Engage in enquiry-based learning by asking and answering questions such as 'What does it mean to be human?'
- Reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Sikh Belief

- See how the truth of all religions is relevant today
- Develop the skills to handle the Bible text and to consider the sacred texts of all religions studied
- Recognise that faith is not based on a positive balance of probabilities but on a commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world
- Respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living
- Develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- Experience the breadth and variety of the community
- Engage in thoughtful dialogue with world faiths and traditions
- Become active citizens, serving their neighbour
- Find a reason for hope in a troubled world
- Understand how religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition

The school bases its teaching of RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children to both learn about religious traditions, and to reflect on what religious ideas and concepts mean to them.

Learning about Christianity

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
- The importance of the Trinity – God the father, Son and Holy Spirit

Learning from Religion

We learn from:

- An empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with this
- Developing a vision for life that transcends a dull materialism and recognises the reality of the spiritual realm
- Understanding ourselves and others, celebrating our shared humanity and the breadth of human achievement
- Examples of Christian living which give priority to the claims of justice, mercy, holiness and love

Developing and understanding of faiths other than Christianity and worldviews

RE should equip pupils to recognise the common search of all humanity for ultimate truth and relationship with the divine.

It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world, therefore, that respect for world faiths and worldviews is fostered in RE within a church school. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other world faiths and worldviews, which is consistent with the school's loyalty to its Christian foundation.

Therefore, RE in this school should also help pupils to:

- Learn about the beliefs, traditions and practices of Non-Christian faiths and all world views, and learn from these 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
- Recognise the common human quest for justice, peace, love and the common goal of the survival of life on this planet

RE and Church School Distinctiveness

The content of the RE curriculum contributes towards our church school distinctiveness through:

- Opportunities to explore the Church's year whilst also exploring that of world faiths other than Christianity
- Study of the story of the local community with its saints and martyrs
- Visits to all places of worship, including the local parish Church and the Cathedral, to develop the understanding of the place of worship as a living community
- Welcoming visitors from the local parish to share their experience of their Christian belief and life
- Liaison with the local religious buildings to enable these visits and links to occur
- Support for the pupils' confident use of religious language
- A well-used set of Bibles and Qu'rans, Torahs et cetera, in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of sacred texts and prayer books from a variety of contexts
- The facility to listen to, and sing, 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions and religions
- Access to artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- Sacred spaces that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection

- Encouragement of mutual respect based on religious values, where pupils and teachers are able to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule
- Pupils making excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and world faiths
- Pupils from Christian and Non-Christian families talking openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and growing in their faith
- Pupils from other faith backgrounds understanding, and being encouraged, in their own faith
- Pupils with no religious background facing the challenge of the Christian faith
- Pupils of all backgrounds having a safe place to explore the place of doubt and certainty in a maturing faith

Contribution of RE to Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Spiritual development within RE in this school 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 diverse community where Jesus', and other religious leaders', command to love one another is put into practice. Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity (and all world religions) as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

Contribution of RE to the Teaching of Other Subjects

Although RE is taught as a discrete subject within our school, it does provide many opportunities for links with other curriculum areas such as English, PSHE, history, geography and the creative arts. In addition, there are strong links between RE and cross-curricular themes and dimensions, including multi-cultural education, equal opportunities, citizenship and health education. As stated previously, it also has strong links with collective worship. The school's vision is embedded across the whole curriculum as well as RE.

School Organisation

The school has seven single-age classes (including one Foundation stage class). Each class has its own long-term plan for RE (see appendices).

Assessment/Planning/Record Keeping and Reporting

The school uses the Manchester Diocese syllabus (supported by RE Today and Natre resources) to plan RE lessons. A long-term plan is followed (Appendix 1) and teachers use this to plan weekly lessons.

Informal assessment is undertaken on a lesson-by-lesson basis through the observation of children at work, as well as through discussion and questioning, so that any misunderstandings or problems can be identified within the lesson. This assessment is reinforced by the marking of children's work. Teachers ensure progression through the curriculum by referring to the characteristic skills for RE. Assessment tasks are part of each discrete unit in the new syllabus and formal assessment takes place at the end of each key stage. Official end of key stage data is submitted through SACRE.

The Ladder of Expectation of Achievement Assessment Tool is used to assess pupils accurately at the end of each academic year and the data is recorded as '**at age related expectation**', '**above age related expectation**' and '**below age-related expectation**' across the whole school.

SEN Provision

At this school, RE is taught to all children, regardless of ability. RE forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through this RE teaching, learning opportunities are provided that enable all pupils to make progress. This is achieved by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's needs. It is the aim of the school to offer equal access to the curriculum to all pupils irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability and social circumstances so that each child has the greatest opportunity to progress.

Parental and Carer Involvement

At Edenfield, it is believed that education is a joint venture between home and school. We encourage the support of parents and carers. Parents' evenings are held twice a year and reports are written and shared with parents on a termly basis. Parents and carers are also actively encouraged to attend the regular church services led by the school as well as weekly family worship.

Parents and carers may choose to withdraw their child from RE lessons and worship if they choose. If such a request is made, the headteacher will explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an agreement.

INSET

Staff development is overseen by the RE Subject Leader and headteacher. Needs are identified by individual teachers in line with the School Improvement Plan and prioritised accordingly.

Role of Subject Leader:

It is the role of the subject leader to:

- Provide support and guidance to all staff
- Organise school-based INSET
- Audit, purchase and distribute resources
- Keep abreast of current developments in RE
- Provide an annual subject development plan with key objectives, actions and intended impact, to contribute to the school development plan
- Be accountable for standards in RE through regular monitoring and evaluation
- Liaise with external personnel
- Assist staff in the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding of RE
- Provide advice, if needed, with the delivery of RE
- Liaise with governors through observing the monitoring of RE throughout school and providing reports to governor meetings
- Ensure that the syllabus is up to date and shows progression in learning

SIAMs Schedule (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

Approximately every five years, the Diocese inspect the school. SIAMS inspections are carried out under Section 48 of the 1988 Education Act. Inspections are overseen by the National Society and are arranged by the Diocese.

A SIAMS inspection focuses on the impact of the Church school's Christian vision on pupils and adults. This involves looking at the school's Christian vision, the provision the school makes because of this vision and how effective this provision is in enabling all pupils to flourish.

RE is only one strand of the seven-strand schedule but may be observed during the inspection. In this strand, the inspector must explore:

- How effective the school is in ensuring pupils flourish through the provision of high quality religious education reflecting the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- How effective the school is in ensuring that religious education expresses the school's Christian vision.

The policy will be reviewed every two years in consultation with staff, the headteacher and governors.

Written by CEG Hartley (RE Subject Leader) in January 2025

Review: January 2027

Appendix 1: RE Long-term plan (see RE today/Natre website for long term plan)