



ST LAURENCE CHURCH
JUNIOR SCHOOL

Religious Education Policy

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(To be reviewed on a two-year cycle)

'Learning, Loving and Sharing, guided by Jesus'

St Laurence Church Junior School Religious Education Policy

‘Start children off on the way they should go,
and even when they are old they will not turn from it.’

Proverbs 22:6

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’

St Laurence Church Junior School is a voluntary aided Church of England school where Christian education is fundamental to every aspect of school life.

Religious Education is provided in conformity with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. The Governors, in consultation with the Head teacher and following advice from the diocese, ensure the school uses *Understanding Christianity* and have decided to adopt the *Birmingham Agreed Syllabus* to supplement teaching worldviews other than Christianity.

Religious Education plays a major part in promoting the Christian aims, values and ethos of our school as expressed in the vision statement.

School Vision and Values

At St Laurence Church Junior School, we aim to help our children to develop holistically to become happy, confident and ambitious. Inspired by Jesus’ actions in the Feeding of the 5000 (*John 6:1-14*), our school values are firmly based on the teachings of Jesus Christ: **Generosity, Thankfulness, Perseverance, Curiosity, Friendship and Forgiveness**. We strive to ensure Christian principles pervade and inform all areas of the school community. We provide academic, emotional and spiritual growth in a Christian environment for all members of our school family by **‘learning, loving and sharing guided by Jesus’**. Religious Education connects with our Christian vision, whilst being an academic subject that is non-confessional in nature.

The Aims of Religious Education

At St Laurence Church Junior School, we seek to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum ensuring promotion of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the child. Our curriculum follows *Understanding Christianity*, a high-quality resource which progresses with key themes throughout the liturgical year, developing in broadening the children’s understanding of Christianity across their four years at St Laurence Junior School. Children study relevant disciplines including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.

We use the *Birmingham Agreed Syllabus (2022)*, to ensure that children have a broad knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews (Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, Humanism, Atheism and Agnostic). It is intended that through learning from faith and learning about worldviews, that our children will be prepared to live, flourish and work in a global community and that Birmingham will become an enriched society. There are opportunities for children to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help form identity in a range of religions and worldviews. Regular

assessment in RE ensures progress significant and attainment high enabling pupils to develop confident religious literacy.

Children at St Laurence Church Junior School should:

- Understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- Engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- Recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies.
- Explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.
- Talk about ideas about God and discuss deep questions that face human beings.
- State important aspects of Christian belief, and explain why they are important for Christians.
- Appreciate the importance of the person of Jesus Christ for Christians.
- Provide examples of Christian practice from different denominations and different nations.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- Respect the faith of others, and value the journey of faith.
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth.
- Speak comfortably about their understandings of faith and life choices.

The distinctive contribution RE makes to the life of the school and other curriculum aims

Religious Education (RE) has a high profile within the curriculum and the curriculum is intrinsic to the outworking of our Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. The RE curriculum works alongside Collective Worship and the PHSE curriculum to ensure children develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally as well as gaining a good understanding of British Values. In addition, the RE curriculum contributes to British Values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Pupils have a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They have opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with people of religious and non-religious worldviews.

Elements of the RE syllabus are reinforced through Collective Worship within the school.

As our Worship Policy states, we maintain close links with the Parish Church through;

- Visits for worship and study
- The involvement of clergy and of other church members in the school's life
- Explained Eucharist as part of the curriculum for all children
- Implementation of Eucharist and Church for parents and confirmed children or who are communicant at their own Churches

As a school we recognise that our children are members of a multi-cultural community in Birmingham. As Jesus had a concern and love for all people, we aim, through our teaching and example, to encourage our children to respect the religious beliefs of others, and to appreciate the diversity of their multi-cultural society.

Teaching and Learning

RE at St Laurence Junior's is taught for a minimum of 1 hour each week in each class. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning using Understanding Christianity and the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. Initial planning of the LTP was completed in collaboration with other Voluntary Aided CofE primary schools in Birmingham and through seeking diocesan advice.

The curriculum for RE is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences. These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

Theology: This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

Philosophy: This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

Human/Social sciences: This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

When using the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus to learn about worldviews other than Christianity, the children are presented with an enquiry question based on one of the 24 dispositions. The children learn about the religious or non-religious tradition, they look at what they can learn from the faith and from their own experiences in order to discern. They use the language theology, philosophy and human/social science in their lessons.

Teachers use a variety of teaching methods to cater for the needs of all learners, this includes: visits, visitors, audio and visual resources.

Evidence of children's learning is in individual RE books, class journals and throughout displays both within the classroom and across the school. Methods of recording include:

- Photographs
- Story writing
- Poetry
- Prayers
- Drama
- Drawings
- Paintings/ sculpture
- Musical compositions
- Reports
- Leaflets

In addition to this, Interfaith Week provides opportunities for children ask 'big questions' and learn about worldviews outside of their curriculum.

Visits

All year groups visit two places of worship each year: a local Christian place of worship (other than Anglican) and a religious place of worship for one of the nine identified religions in Birmingham. These visits take place so the children can see diversity within Christianity and to promote understanding, empathy and community cohesion through learning about other cultures and practices in worship. This also promotes with the British Values of Tolerance and Respect.

Year 3- Gurdwara / Catholic Church

Year 4-Synagogue / Methodist Church

Year 5-Mandir / Orthodox Church

Year 6- Mosque / Baptist Church

Planning, monitoring and assessment

The Understanding Christianity scheme provides lesson objectives and outcomes across lower and upper key stage two. Seven topics are explored throughout the year. The Birmingham Agreed Syllabus is used to structure two other religious worldview units of work for each year group. Non-religious world views are also learnt about in conjunction with the enquiry questions asked throughout each unit of work. Long-term plans show the coverage of the curriculum.

The Long-Term Plan is updated by the RE Lead Teacher annually and planning is monitored termly. Following consultation with the Church School Distinctiveness Adviser for the Birmingham Diocese, skills records have been created to allow teacher to assess the progress of the children in their class. These are kept up to date by class teachers each half term and analysed by the RE Lead. In addition to this, there are knowledge organisers provided for each unit of work, the children complete an 'exit quiz' to show their understanding and children are asked at the beginning and end of each unit of work about their understanding to demonstrate progression made.

Biannually, staff INSET is held to allow teacher the opportunity to monitor the work completed in RE.

Parents are informed about their child's progress in RE at the end of the year as part of the child's annual written report.

Equal opportunities and SEN provision

At St Laurence Church Junior School, all children are taught RE with the aim of giving equal opportunities irrespective of belief, gender, race, physical or academic ability. Children are provided with a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They have opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

All pupils have the entitlement to full access to the RE Curriculum. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education and Collective Worship. If parents wish to exercise this right they are invited to discuss this with Mr Murphy, Headteacher.