



St. James' Church of England Primary School

**'Building One Faith, One
Family,
Our Future'**

Religious Education Policy

Written by D. Theobalds – Summer 2016
Edited by Julie Wilton/Melissa Tindall – Autumn 2022
Approved by Governors – Autumn 2022

Review Date – Autumn 2025 (Standards Committee)

Foundation, Vision and Intent

St James' Lower Darwen

Church of England Primary School



"Building One Faith, One Family, Our Future."

"We offer a holistic curriculum that champions our community and is aspirational."

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

through

ENRICHMENT

THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

SKATS

FORGIVENESS

COMPASSION

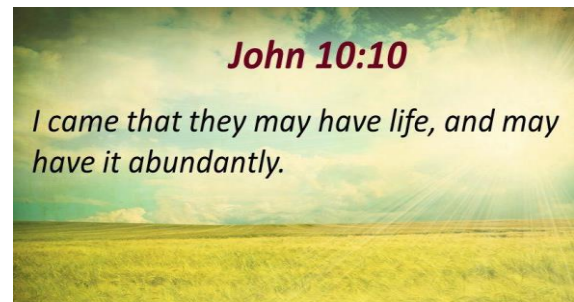
LOVE

TRUTH

JUSTICE

Jeremiah 29:11

John 10:10



We want our children to know that **God has a plan for them** that means **they live their best life possible**.

Each **policy** and procedure within school, alongside the ongoing **curriculum** delivery, our **SKATS** programme, **enrichment** and the **spiritual development** offered to our families through Worship, RE and our links with Church, work towards making this happen.

The Importance of RE at St. James'

At St James' C.E.P School Lower Darwen, the Religious Education provided is in conformity with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England as laid down in the Trust Deed. In a Voluntary Aided School, the management of RE is a distinctive role of the governors and head teacher. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of the RE provided in its school. RE plays a significant role in the spiritual dimension of life in school and alongside Collective Worship is a vital tool to develop the distinctive Christian vision and character of St. James'.

Fundamentals

The RE at St James is fully compliant with 'The Church of England Education office Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education in Church of England Schools.'

R.E. plays a major part in promoting the Christian aims, values and ethos of the school.

The school has adopted the R.E. Syllabus for Church Schools produced by the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education – 'Questful RE'. Understanding Christianity materials are also used as a resource to support the teaching of the syllabus.

In line with Blackburn Diocesan guidance, a minimum of 38 hours are allocated for R.E. each year. The annual allocation of 38 hours falls within the area of the national guidelines of 5%, although in order to teach Religious Education effectively in our Church school, these figures represent an absolute minimum amount of time. Indeed, there will be occasions when Religious Education takes a larger slice of the curriculum at St James', reflecting our greater commitment to the subject.

In line with Blackburn Diocesan guidance, Christianity predominates with approximately 80% of the total curriculum time for Religious Education. The remaining 20% (roughly 8 hours per year) is devoted to the study of other faiths.

Using the non-Christian faith links in the syllabus, pupils encounter all major world faiths and discuss other world views when appropriate.

There is a legal distinction between Collective Worship and Religious Education, although the two areas are inextricably linked and both have a vital role in shaping our pupils' spiritual development. Acts of Collective Worship at St James' are often linked to the Church's calendar, and hence there are many times when themes and topics are contemplated during worship and studied during Religious Education.

Our school has developed strong links with St James' Church. Rev. Rebecca Roberts, leads a whole school act of worship in Church each week and takes part in RE lessons regularly across the school and year. Additionally, special occasions in the Church's year (e.g. Easter) are marked with services in Church attended by the whole school. St James' Church is recognised as a significant resource which can be used in many ways to support the teaching of Religious Education.

Responsibility for the Policy

This policy was originally written in September 2008, having been based on "Blackburn Diocesan/District Guidelines for a Policy in Religious Education" and following consultation with Mrs S. Cliffe the then Head teacher, and Mrs L. Fenton, Blackburn Diocesan Senior Adviser for Religious Education and Collective Worship. The policy was approved by the Governing Body in 2008, 2011 and in 2013. The policy was updated in autumn 2016 by Head teacher, Mr D. Theobalds, checked by Mrs L. Fenton

and approved by the governors on the Resources Committee. This policy was updated by Mrs J. Wilton, current RE Coordinator, alongside Mrs L Fenton and approved by the governors on the Resources Committee in 2019. The policy, as it currently stands, was updated in November 2022 by Julie Wilton RE Coordinator and Melissa Tindall, Curriculum Coordinator

At present, Mrs J Wilton is the named co-ordinator for Religious Education at St. James', Lower Darwen. It is the responsibility of the co-ordinator to ensure the overall leadership of RE and the implementation of the subject policy.

Our Christian Vision for R.E at St James'

At St James' all children are encouraged to question, respectfully, all aspects of their life and the paths they will choose. We are journeying through our time at St James' together, following the guidance and teachings of Jesus, using our school values and SKATs.

We ask big questions of ourselves and of others and we look to the teachings of Jesus to help guide and formulate our answers.

Our children learn to be respectful and knowledgeable about faiths other than Christianity, giving them the understanding that they will need to live amongst all religions and cultures happily and respectfully.

Religious Education in Church Schools should help pupils to:

- reflect theologically and explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society;
- reflect critically on the truth and claims of Christian belief;
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today;
- understand the challenge faced by Christians in today's pluralist and post-modern society;
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text;
- recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world;
- begin to develop their own beliefs, commitments and values;
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious;
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions;
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour;
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world;
- understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

Religious Education in Church Schools should also help pupils to:

- learn about other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and *from them* 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 fruitful to their own tradition;
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions.
- develop their understanding of British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. This is taught through worship and R.E and the planning and delivery of

a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of all pupils.

Religious Education in Church Schools should enable:

- pupils and teachers to talk openly and freely about their own personal 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 to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow their faith;
- pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith;
- pupils with no religious background to be given an insight into what it means to be a person of faith;
- pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society.

The Distinctive Content of the Religious Education Curriculum in a Church School should:

- provide opportunities to explore the experience of the Church year;
- study of the story of the local Christian community with its saints and martyrs;
- promote visits to places of worship, especially the local parish Church and a 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;
- enable liaison with the local parish to enable these visits and links to occur;
- promote skills to confidently use religious language to express knowledge and opinion;
- offer a well-used set of bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of bibles and prayer books from a variety of contexts;
- provide the facility to listen to Christian 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions;
- enable access to a Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence;
- offer a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection.

Content and Approaches

The Religious Education provided at St James' is planned in accordance with the Blackburn Diocesan Religious Education Syllabus for Church Schools 2022 – 'Questful RE' and incorporates the use of Understanding Christianity resources to aid planning. Teachers' medium and short term planning is their own and uses the syllabus flexibly and with impact in mind.

The Diocesan Syllabus provides an overall framework which consists of topics (e.g. light), themes (e.g. Christmas or the Bible) and concepts (e.g. prayer). In practice, some of the units are most effectively taught as discrete blocks of work, although there is plenty of scope for cross-curricular links and teachers are encouraged to explore such links where appropriate. In Reception, for example, Unit EYFS 1 "I am Special" is clearly linked to other Areas of Learning, notably *Personal, Social and Emotional Development* and *Knowledge and Understanding of the World*.

The Diocesan Syllabus ensures that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. At St James' we offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through school.

At St James' we teach Religious Education to all children, providing quality learning opportunities for pupils of differing ability levels, including those with Special Educational Needs, disabilities or medical needs and those on the Gifted and Talented register. Teachers differentiate lessons acknowledging different preferred learning styles and they strive to consider any targets set for individual children in IEPs. They are encouraged to liaise with the school's SENCo as necessary.

Assessment of children's learning and progress in Religious Education is carried out in a variety of ways. Most commonly, teachers make informal judgements of the children's understanding as they are observed during lessons. Questioning is used carefully to challenge pupils and to provoke discussion and debate. When marking pupils' recorded work, teachers make judgements about pupils' knowledge and progress, and about levels of understanding. Unit assessment grids can also be seen in individual work books or class worship scrapbooks.

Ladder of Expectation is available within the current RE Syllabus provided by the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education. This is used in conjunction with teacher assessment to level children's work ensuring that work is levelled correctly in order to achieve maximum achievement across all key stages. This assessment tool can be located on staff shared within the RE curriculum folder.

Resources are used to bring the subject to life and can be found in the RE section of the Resources Room in school and in shared Google Drive resource folders. Teachers use a wide range of materials to bring learning to life ranging from artefacts and art to online, interactive games and pages.

Consultation, Management and Review

The Blackburn Diocesan Religious Education Syllabus for Church Schools (2022) 'Questful RE' has been fully implemented and used since October 2022. Amendments and supplementary materials are added as appropriate.

It is the role of the RE coordinator to manage Religious Education throughout school and to take the subject forwards at St James'. Directed time and release time is used to monitor and develop the subject.

The School Development Plan identifies specific training needs and provision for staff development. The RE coordinator has the opportunity to attend INSET provided by the Diocese and by local authorities.

The RE coordinator is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject at St James'. The RE coordinator produces yearly action plans which evaluate the strengths in the subject and indicates areas for improvement.

The RE coordinator to report to the school's Governing Body when directed. For example, if the subject were to be a focus of the School Improvement Plan or the focus of a post inspection action plan, then the co-ordinator might need to present governors with specific information pertinent to the subject at St James'.

Policies are reviewed on a three year rolling cycle, hence this policy for RE will next be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2025.

Appendix – The Legal Requirements for Religious Education

Legal Requirements

Religious Education in Church Schools is governed by the 1996 and 1998 Education Acts as well as by the Trust Deed of the School.

The legislation requires Religious Education to be provided for all pupils (1996 Education Act, Section 352). The type of Religious Education provided must be in accordance with the Trust Deed.

Parental Rights of Withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided school

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education. This provision and its limitations must be indicated in the school Prospectus.

Advice on parental rights of withdrawal has been set out clearly in the Blackburn Diocesan Syllabus for RE (p4):

“Parents may request the Governing Body to provide Religious Education for their children according to the Agreed Syllabus. This can only be requested when parents cannot, with reasonable convenience, arrange for their children to attend another school where Religious Education is provided according to the Agreed Syllabus. The Governing Body **should** make such provision unless the circumstances make it unreasonable to do so.”

Complaints about the Provision of Religious Education

It is hoped that any complaint will be resolved informally by the Head teacher. There is also provision for complaints to be heard by a Committee of the Governing Body possibly with advice from the Diocese or District. However, if the complaint is still not satisfactorily resolved, then further procedures come into play and the matter will be adjudicated by a specially constituted sub-committee of the Diocesan Board of Education acting on behalf of the Bishop of the Diocese.