

Religious Education Policy

St Christopher's Primary School

Robert – 'I really enjoy RE. I don't really mind if I get stuff a bit wrong sometimes, because I'll improve it next time. I just really enjoy RE.'

Policy update: Jan 2018

RE Coordinator: Helen Norman

Link Governor: Rev. Beth Allison-Glenny

Review date: Jan 2021

RE at St. Christopher's School

RE at St. Christopher's School is a valued part of the school curriculum among pupils and staff. It is not only intellectually rigorous, encouraging critical thinking and lively debate, but also offers vital opportunities for children to reflect and consider big questions.

Our pupils are encouraged to challenge old beliefs, explore commonality between their faith and those of others and show empathy towards people of all faiths. Our Christian values are reinforced regularly and explored through RE.

Belonging

Children are encouraged to explore what it means to belong to a faith and how that impacts on the choices that they and the people around them, make.

Joseph (Christian) – 'At our school no one is left out, no matter what colour or religion. Everyone is treated the same and I'm thankful for that.'

Love and Empathy

They are encouraged to show Christian love (agape) and empathy to those in need.

Robert (Agnostic) – 'There is one problem with our school and that is that it is really big. I think about all the poor people and all the food and things that we waste.'

Amaan (Muslim) – 'We are really lucky because a lot of people don't have a nice kitchen with lovely food like we have.'

Imaan (Muslim) – 'That is why Muslims fast to see how the poorer people are feeling, because some people don't even have food to break their fast with.'

Joseph (Christian) – 'Can I tell you about my job? When I'm older, I'm going to get a job being really rich and then I'll go around the world finding all the people who don't have enough money. I'll give them money and buy them a flat. I'll give them some food and enough things to sell to get them going and they won't be poor anymore.'

Courage

The enquiry approach to RE encourages children to question and change their mind about things. They courageously address challenging questions and issues. They learn to explore ideas without fear of 'getting it wrong' as there is no 'wrong' answer. This makes them more fearless and bold in their questioning.

Leah (agnostic): 'I liked that it is free and you can say whatever you want. You have to trust everyone in the class. Our teachers say that there is no such thing as a wrong answer.'

Robert (Agnostic): 'I really enjoy RE. I don't really mind if I get stuff a bit wrong, because I'll just improve it next time. I just really enjoy RE.'

Guidance

This policy is informed by current national guidance:

RE in English School: non-statutory guidance 2010

RE: Realising the potential Ofsted 2013

A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013

The Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus 2014

The aims of our Religious Education

On advice from the Diocesan RE Advisor, St. Christopher's School uses the Discovery RE scheme of work.

Discovery RE meets the requirements of the locally agreed Oxfordshire syllabus and is aligned to the non-statutory guidance described above.

We intend that Religious Education will enable our children to grow as outlined in the school vision statement.

'Flourishing together in a Christian community where every child has a life-long love of learning and has the confidence, resilience, skills and ambition to achieve their dreams'.

All children learn about the Christian faith, with Christianity being the most-studied religion across a child's time at St. Christopher's. This is supported by assemblies, guest speakers and visits to St. James church throughout the year.

Amaan (Muslim) – 'When I saw the video of Jesus on the cross, I was crying, because I could see how he felt. Even though I don't believe it, I could see how Christians would feel watching it.'

Imaan (Muslim) – 'It would be really hard to Christians to see that. Like on Eid, when I think about the story of Isa and sacrifice I feel shocked and sad. That's how I felt when I found out Jesus was nailed to a cross. I felt really upset. I'm happy to learn more and care about other religions.'

Joseph (Christian) – 'I believe that Jesus died for us, to save us and I'm thankful for that.'

Robert (agnostic) – 'Most people don't think about the real meaning of Christmas, but I'm going to. Before I have my Christmas dinner, I'm going to stop and have a think about Jesus and what Christmas really means'. (Reported by parent)

Using the enquiry method helps children to become active learners. They are encouraged to pursue interests and challenge previously held ideas.

The vocabulary of Religious Education is extremely challenging: vocabulary for each lesson is displayed on the board and children are encouraged to 'maggie' interesting words and phrases. Regular debate and stimulating discussion develop verbal reasoning skills.

Izzy (Christian): 'It's really interesting. We have a range of people who are religious and lots who aren't and it's cool to see their ideas and opinions. They are our friends and it gives us more understanding of them.'

Arun (Muslim): 'We said water was eternal and my teacher said 'but what if there's no water in the future?' I really remember that. It makes you think.'

Discovery RE content.

Foundation stage

Enquiry	Religions studied
What makes people special?	Christianity
What is Christmas?	Christianity
How do people celebrate?	Christianity, Islam, Judaism
What is Easter?	Christianity
What can we learn from stories?	Christianity, Islam, Hinduism
What makes places special?	Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism

Year One

Enquiry	Religions studied
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity
What gift would I have given to Jesus if He had been born in my town and not in Bethlehem?	Christianity
Was it always easy for Jesus to show friendship?	Christianity
Why was Jesus welcomed like a king or celebrity by the crowds on Palm Sunday?	Christianity
Is Shabbat important for Jesus children?	Judaism
Does celebrating Chanukah make Jewish children feel closer to God?	Judaism

Year Two

Enquiry	Religions studied
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?	Christianity
Why did God give Jesus to the world?	Christianity
Does praying at regular intervals everyday help a Muslim in her/his everyday life?	Islam
Is it true that Jesus came back to life again?	Christianity
Does going to the mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam
Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam

Year Three

Enquiry	Religions studied
Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?	Hinduism
Has Christmas lost its true meaning?	Christianity
Could Jesus really heal people? Where these miracles or is there another explanation?	Christianity
What is 'good' about Good Friday?	Christianity
How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?	Hinduism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?	Hinduism

Year Four

Enquiry	Religions studied
How special is the relationship Jews have with God?	Judaism
What is the most significant part of the Nativity story for Christians today?	Christianity
How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?	Judaism
Is forgiveness possible always?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Judaism
Do people need to go to church to show they are Christians?	Christianity

Year Five

Enquiry	Religions studied
How far would a Sikh go for their religion?	Sikhism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism
Did God intend for Jesus to be crucified and if so was Jesus aware of this?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Sikhism
What is the best way for a Christian to show commitment to God?	Christianity

Year Six

Enquiry	Religions studied
What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?	Islam
How significant is it that Mary was Jesus' mother?	Christianity
Is anything ever eternal?	Christianity
Is Christianity still a strong religion 2000 years after Jesus was on Earth?	Christianity
Does belief in Akhirah help Muslims lead good lives?	Islam, Christianity (comparative)

How is RE organised in this school?

St. Christopher's has an RE Coordinator – Helen Norman. R.E. is taught weekly to all children. Some RE may be taught during PPA time and some by the class teacher during the week.

Planning is done by individual staff members, using the Discovery RE medium term planning. Where Year Groups are shared, staff share planning. All staff are encouraged to adapt shared planning to suit their own teaching styles, whilst still adhering to the key Enquiry question and termly outcome.

Differentiation/ SEN

Staff should differentiate their lessons according to need as in other subjects. RE must be accessible to all pupils.

Subhan (Muslim): 'RE is something that everyone can be good at.'

Assessment/ Attainment descriptors

The RE Coordinator worked with Diocesan Religious Education advisor Jo Fageant to develop frontispieces for each term. There are clear assessment targets, with levels, written in accessible language. These should be discussed with the class and children encouraged to reflect on their progress throughout the term.

Arun (Muslim): 'The staff comments are really helpful. We have next steps comments and we reply to them.'

Assessment is expected to be an ongoing process and take different forms, including self-assessment, peer assessment, verbal feedback and the formal end of term assessment, using the RE Discovery outlines.

Joe (atheist): 'We assess our own work and sometimes give our friends feedback about their work. It feels like we are working together and cooperating.'

Recording and tracking progress

The progress of pupils is evident in the termly outlines. Level descriptors are highlighted as the pupils reach them. It is expected that this will build a clear picture of progress in RE over a year. Children should reach the same or exceed the levels achieved in other subjects.

Monitoring and evaluation

RE books are part of regular school-wide book scrutiny. The RE Coordinator looks at books half-termly and feeds back to teachers.

Reporting to parents/ carers

RE is included in the end of year report to parents.

Termly information about Enquiry Questions go out in newsletters, encouraging parents to discuss them with their children beforehand. Enquiry questions are also published on the school website. The RE Coordinator takes part in 'The Big Question', setting challenging questions for the whole school to respond to in their own time.

Contributors

St. Christopher's School has good links with several members of our local community. These individuals and organisations have supported us with planning, guidance and personal insight.

[Rev. Beth \(Christian\)](#) – regular assemblies.

[Rev Geoff Bayliss \(C of E Christian\)](#) – regular assemblies

[Robin Sharples](#) – Collective worship advisor and assembly guest

[Members of Cowley churches \(Christian\)](#) – regular 'open the book' assemblies

[Major Sam Johnson– Oxford Salvation Army – Why did God give Jesus to the world/ Has Christmas lost its true meaning?](#)

Major Sam spoke to several lower school classes about the work of the Salvation Army. The school then ran the Salvation Army gift appeal and Sam came back to receive our donations as part of the school Christmas Service, attended by parents, Governors and Cowley St. James congregation.

[Lesley Williams \(C of E Christian\)](#) – 'What does Easter mean to Christians?'

Lesley brings her Easter Egg collection in every year to show the class and discusses the symbol of the egg with the children.

[Lisa Vernon \(Christian\)](#) – 'Did Jesus really come back to life?'

Lisa debates this question with classes and talks to them about her belief in the resurrection. She also talks to them about how she celebrates Easter with her family.

['What is the best way for Christians to show commitment to God?'](#)

Lisa talks to Yr5 about her Christian faith in action, visiting prisoners at HMP Bullingdon. She explains how she and her husband try to support those who have committed serious crimes, offering them comfort and a new way of life through Christianity. This has also helped children at St. Christopher's understand the consequences of crime and the impact of crime on victims and the families of offenders.

[The congregation of Cowley St. James church.](#)

Classes have been to several events at the church for key Christian festivals including the Christingle service, Easter and Christmas.

The Learning Environment

RE lessons should be as engaging and challenging as other subject studied at St. Christopher's. We use video, quizzes, word scrambles, visits, speakers, sacred texts, diary entries, group work, drama, I.T. and a number of other stimuli to keep RE interesting and relevant.

Examples of more 'active learning' include:

Children running between two hills to emulate pilgrims running between Safa and Marwa.

Using our storytelling circle to write a play in an RE/literacy topic, based on the nativity story. The children wrote speech bubbles for 'characters', then translated these freeze frames into plays.

Practising wudu.

Sharing bread and blackcurrant juice whilst discussing the meaning of the Last Supper.

Using the parachute to explore the meaning of teamwork and belonging.

Imaan (Muslim) – 'We have really good fun learning about religion. We make the food of other religions, like we made rose creams. Our teacher makes us laugh.'

Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues involving parents and carers

Key enquiry questions for each term are published in the school newsletter, giving parents a chance to discuss this with their children and also to raise potentially sensitive issues with staff.

RE at St. Christopher's aims to be challenging and thought-provoking. During RE lessons, there may be controversial and sensitive areas touched upon. Staff at St. Christopher's have good relationships with parents and an understanding of family background. If a sensitive issue arises, PPA cover staff should always check with the classroom teacher for any relevant information, for example a recent bereavement. If deemed necessary, parents should be informed of any potential sensitivity beforehand.

Noah (Christian) – I was sad thinking about (my dog), but my teacher told me that it was good to think about him. I should think about all the nice things that we did together and all the fun stuff, then I won't feel so sad. I feel better. (Reported by a parent).

Withdrawal from RE lessons

Parents are entitled to withdraw their pupils from RE lessons. They are encouraged to speak to the Headteacher before requesting this. Some children have been permitted to take part in AT1 (learning about) a faith, but withdrawn from AT2 (learning from). When a child is withdrawn from RE, parents are asked to provide appropriate work/ reading material from the child's faith.

Links to other policies and curriculum areas

The Discovery RE scheme of work has signposted links to Jigsaw PSHE, also used in school. Where appropriate, staff are encouraged to make links between subjects.

Training and support for staff.

St. Christopher's is a member of NATRE and subscribes to 'R.E.Today'.

The RE Coordinator attends regular meetings with other Diocesan Schools

The RE Coordinator regularly meets informally with staff regarding RE, including offers of support with planning, visitors and resources where necessary.

Policy review

Date: Jan 2018

Date of next review: Jan 2021

Signed Headteacher

Signed Chair of Governors