

# St Thomas CE (VC) Primary School



## Religious Education Policy

Policy Reviewed on:	September 2023
Policy approved by Governing Body on:	
Policy to be reviewed on:	September 2025



# Religious Education

## RE at St Thomas

### Intent:

Our vision for RE aims to give all pupils experience and knowledge of the Christian Faith explicitly through our Worship and RE and implicitly through our behaviour and attitudes throughout our school day. We believe that our children enjoy the stories and morals of the bible and teachings of Jesus Christ. This supports their personal development, our school togetherness and their engagement with the modern world.

Our world is enriched by a wide and profound diversity of cultures and beliefs. Human beings are strengthened and empowered by learning from each other. Engaging and stimulating RE helps to nurture informed and resilient responses to misunderstanding, stereotyping and division. It offers a place of integrity and security within which difficult or 'risky' questions can be tackled within a safe but challenging context. Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

In RE pupils discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions, in local, national and global contexts, through learning about and from religions and other world views. They learn to appraise the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.

Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and other world views, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in society with its diverse understanding of life from religious and other world views.

Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

### Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND) / Pupil Premium / Higher Attainers

All children will have Quality First Teaching. Any child with identified SEND or in receipt of pupil premium funding may have work additional to and different from their peers in order to access the curriculum dependent upon their needs. As well as this, our school offers a demanding and varied curriculum, providing children with a range of opportunities in order for them to reach their full potential and consistently achieve highly from their starting points.

## Implementation:

In our school, the curriculum is based on the Local Agreed Syllabus for Calderdale, Kirklees, Bradford and Leeds (Believing and Belonging), produced by SACRE for teaching from September 2019.

There are three broad aims, each subdivided into two areas. A balance of these should be included in any curriculum plan at every key stage. Pupils and students should:

- A. Investigate the beliefs and practices of religions and other world views;
- B. Investigate how religions and other world views address questions of meaning, purpose & value;
- C. Investigate how religions and other world views influence morality, identity and diversity.

At Key Stage 1, teaching and learning is focused around Christianity and Islam, alongside understanding of non-religious approaches to life. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning is extended to include Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, alongside understanding of non-religious approaches to life. Other faiths will be studied alongside the core religions and pupils will additionally study Hinduism and Buddhism systematically at secondary level.

Religious Education scheme of work follows units from the Kirklees Local Agreed Syllabus for RE. To support delivery of the syllabus, we plan our lessons around the units of work provided to support it. Each unit of work will follow a Big Question throughout it that is related to that particular unit. Children will have opportunity to explore and discuss questions. It is mainly taught as part of our creative curriculum and has been planned where appropriate to fit in with specific curriculum topics. RE enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. As a Christian school, we believe that every child should feel that they are appreciated, loved valued and unique, because God made them that way.

At St Thomas we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world's faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. Each unit of work is accompanied with a knowledge organiser that guides pupils through specific knowledge that they need to embed for the topic. This ensures relevant knowledge progresses with the pupil through the years. We enable the children to develop their knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, Sikhism, Islam and Judaism. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We explore RE through key questions, enquiry and investigation. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religion.

Our school has very strong links with St Thomas' Church where visits to church is incorporated into the units relating to Christianity. Children get to learn about the purpose of the church in our community as well as attending and taking part in services each term. Each half term we carry out Faith Weeks and children learn about important aspects of Christianity such as Holy Trinity, Easter, The Lord's Prayer and Pentecost. Work carried out by children for Faith Week is displayed both in school and in church. The major link we make with church is on St Thomas Day when each child and member of staff create a human link from the church building to the school building and a wooden sculptured book of St Thomas is passed along the full line by each child. This encourages children to see the important role that the church plays in our life.

## **Impact:**

The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:

- In line with St Thomas values, to show respect for themselves and others;
- Have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity in society;
- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain.
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- To be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- Develop an understanding of religious traditions and appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today.
- Develop investigative and research skills, and make reasoned judgements about religious issues.

RE contributes to oracy and literacy through writing thoughts, opinions, discussions and questions. RE at St Thomas makes a substantial contribution to pupils' SMSC development by, for example, weekly quiet reflection time in class collective worship following our termly themes. A rounded programme of Collective Worship helps to promote SMSC, providing clear guidance on what is right and what is wrong. Organised visits to religious leaders and their places of worship instil a respect and consideration of all faiths.

Pupil voice is an important part of our RE curriculum where each of our units start with a big question. Pupils get to discuss and put forward their views about a big question relating to that unit. The questions become more challenging and thought provoking as the units progress through the school years. This encourages more independent and creative thinking, giving them an opportunity to express their views in different ways.

## **Leadership and Management**

The RE lead supports and monitors the subject and ensures the time spent on RE is based on recommendations set out in the Curriculum Review (1996). This is 'A minimum 5% of curriculum time is given to RE.' this is equivalent to 36 hours per year in key stage 1 and 45 hours per year in key stage 2.

The RE lead's role is to support staff in the following ways:

- Setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children;
- Providing activity based tasks that all children can access.

Lessons are normally taught by the class teacher or a qualified teacher covering PPA.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter other faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of different faith communities.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. Children can explore religious festivals such as Easter, Advent and Harvest to further develop their religious thinking.

A variety of teaching methods are used including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, godly play, the use of artefacts, pictures, film, visits, stories and the use of periods of stillness and quiet reflection. We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by ensuring the challenge of the task suits the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example by:

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We assess progress of pupils against the end of key stage statements in the syllabus. Teachers assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgements as they observe pupils during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or verbal feedback. Teachers carry out assessment at the end of each unit to measure the impact of their knowledge and action any issues that arise from that impact. RE is assessed by the RE lead at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and children's work monitored throughout the year through book scrutiny and using pupil voice.

As a church school we are required to report on progress in RE in line with the core principles of assessment outlined by the DfE. We will report to parents on individual pupils' achievement relative to the end of key stage statements in at least years 2 and 6 or when a pupil leaves school.

### **Partnerships with Parents**

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw a child from religious education. If a parent is considering withdrawal from RE we will listen to their concerns, inviting them to do so with the head teacher or other representative of the school. We work hard to ensure that any reservations or doubts may be accommodated to avoid withdrawal but recognise that a parent has this right if reservations cannot be resolved. Any formal decision to withdraw should be made in writing to the head teacher. The school will arrange for appropriate arrangements to be made to supervise the pupil in school during RE lessons.

The school welcomes enquiries or questions about RE. In the first instance parents should contact their child's class teacher.

### ***Management of the policy***

Policy created Miss S Dickson. To be reviewed 2025.