

St John's C.E. Primary School

Friern Barnet

Religious Education Policy

Introductory Statement

Our school motto 'FAITH, EXCELLENCE AND ENJOYMENT' puts 'Faith' at the forefront and at the heart of our identity as a church school.

RE is much more than an academic subject. Religion has sought to make sense of the on-going human search for meaning, context and purpose in the face of life and death: "Who am I?"; "What am I?"; "Where am I?" Faith offers a profound spiritual dimension to the search.

As a Church of England school, Christianity provides the framework for beginning the spiritual discovery and experience of faith. The children learn to discern the teachings of Christ as the way of developing positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships needed to develop and sustain a community. The Christian Values as found in the "Fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5: 22-23) are at the heart of our curriculum and learning, and represent all that we are and all that we aspire to be. Through Collective Worship, both at school and at church, children learn to communicate with God and to value the positive role He plays in the fulfilment of their lives. Children become conversant with religious practice and the awe, wonder and mystery inherent in the liturgy of the church and throughout the Christian Gospel. They visit churches of other Christian denominations to appreciate the similarities we share and the differences that divide us and so attain a sense of the way faith evolves over time and through events and experiences.

Of great importance is the need for Religious Education to reflect the community of the school and society at large: to recognise 'our neighbour' and live out the commandment 'to love one another'. The multi-cultural and multi-faith dimension of our school and its community is respected: the children study the major faiths- their customs, festivals and way of life; they visit other places of worship to understand their practices; they listen to stories and experiences of other worshippers and how these have shaped their lives. Children learn to respect and acknowledge each other thus 'prejudice through ignorance' is avoided: "Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them..." (Matthew 7:12).

Religious Education is often recognised as the 'key driver' in providing opportunities for SMSC development and the promotion of British Values (although by no means exclusive).

Aims

- To embrace the Christian ethos of the school
- To ensure Christian values are embedded throughout the curriculum, as described in the 'Fruit of the Spirit' Galatians 5:22-23
- To ensure opportunities for worship and prayer are offered throughout the day and take place as part of normal school practice
- To encourage a sensitive and empathetic awareness of the plight and needs of other people within this country and beyond, through the use of 'Reflection Areas' around the school
- To provide opportunities for SMSC development that are cross-curricular in nature and lie at the heart of the curriculum
- To know about and understand a range of religions and world views, recognising the diversity that exists within the UK
- To make available for children opportunities to respond to timely and developing events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local or worldwide
- To create a religiously and philosophically literate individual who can make a positive contribution to society
- To show how British Values and Christian Values are intertwined, highlighting the important relationship between Church and State

Objectives

- RE lessons should offer opportunities for a structured time of reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate
- Lessons should reflect an appropriate balance of 'learning about' and 'learning from' religion (AT1 & AT2)
- SOW should build in progression across the years in terms of variety of material, method of delivery and presentation of work
- Lessons should be 'enquiry led'- searching, hypothesising, challenging, analysing- giving children the opportunity to comment on the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- Work given should be differentiated according to the '8 level scale' and reflect the abilities of the children within a class
- Tasks should be creative and open-ended to allow children to make personal reflections and critical responses to questions including ethical issues.
- RE lessons should allow for breadth and depth of learning
- Assessments at the end of a unit of work should allow for knowledge to be put into practice to show application to real life situations (AT2)

- Learning should be extended and enhanced through planned visits to places of religious significance and interest so that children can explore and learn at first hand

The Curriculum

The school has adopted the new RE syllabus offered by the LDBS. Topics are broadly two-thirds Christian based with a third focussing on wider world religions (see provision map below showing long term yearly planning).

There are topics to teach in RE- however, in our school, it is much more than a single subject for gaining knowledge: it is a tool and a vehicle used for self-discovery and self-identification; for making sense of the world around us and discovering our role within it; for opening our eyes to the realities of life and finding ways in which we can make a positive contribution that really matters. Our Curriculum therefore seeks to create a spiritually developed individual who is:

- Spiritually, Morally, Socially, Culturally aware
- Confident and content in their own skin
- Accepting, tolerant and non-judgemental
- Open-minded and naturally curious
- Speaks out for justice, fairness
- Appreciates the wealth that exists in a culturally diverse society
- Has empathy and sensitivity and knows how to 'reach out'
- Understands the practical application of British and Christian values that our school and society promotes.
- Knows how to agree and disagree respectfully, accepting the right of others to differ.

COMMUNITY COHESION programme puts 'service' into practice and shows children the importance of 'giving back' to the society in which they live.

CHARITY AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS throughout the year illustrate the need to assist those less fortunate than ourselves who require our help.

REFLECTION AREAS around the school encourage contemplation of self and of others locally and nationally

CENTRALITY OF PRAYER and COLLECTIVE WORSHIP opens children's hearts and minds to understand the importance of accepting God and his guiding influence into their lives.

Good teaching in RE allows for children to gain knowledge about religion that they are then able to apply to situations they encounter, thus extending learning beyond the literal.

Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural (SMSC)

What is meant by SMSC? Definitions offered by Ofsted:

SPIRITUAL: 'Explore beliefs and experiences; respect faiths, feelings and values; enjoy learning about oneself, others and the surrounding world; use imagination and creativity; reflect.'

School provision enables children to discover their inner being and identity, to forge positive and sustained relationships with others, to recognise a divine presence that can guide and fulfil their lives and to develop characteristics such as courage, hope, acceptance, strength and love, so that they are equipped to face the challenges and opportunities that will come their way throughout their lives.

MORAL: 'Recognise right and wrong; respect the law; understand consequences; investigate moral and ethical issues; offer reasoned views.'

School provision enables children to consider, respond to and make judgements and choices relating to matters of right and wrong, values and behaviour. They learn to recognise the needs and interests of others as well as themselves and develop characteristics such as truthfulness, kindness, unselfishness, integrity and justice. They appreciate the importance of respecting the well-being and rights of each person.

SOCIAL: 'Use a range of social skills; participate in the local community; appreciate diverse viewpoints; participate, volunteer and cooperate; resolve conflict; engage with the 'British Values' of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance.'

School provision enables children to relate to others successfully. They develop an understanding of the responsibilities that accompany being a member of various communities- family, school, local, national, global- and the importance of 'service' to these communities, recognising the important role they can play if communities are to be developed and sustained. The development of social skills and positive attitudes is essential, with characteristics such as respectfulness, tolerance, helpfulness and a willingness to get involved, so that they can play a full and fulfilling part as citizens in society.

CULTURAL: 'Appreciate cultural influences; appreciate the role of British parliamentary system; participate in cultural opportunities; understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.'

School provision enables children to develop an awareness and appreciation of the diversity and richness in their own culture that has shaped their heritage, and that of others, within a diverse school community and beyond. Cultural development makes a positive contribution to children's well-being and enriches individuals and communities. Children develop characteristics such as respect for ethnic and socio-economic groups, recognition and appreciation of 'difference' and the value of participation within artistic, musical, sporting,

and technological opportunities. The contribution that family members can make to cultural understanding is valued and maximised.

Values

BRITISH VALUES: ‘Promoting principles which encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

CHRISTIAN VALUES: Values derived from the teachings of Jesus and taught by Christians throughout the history of the religion. In our school these centre around the ‘Fruit of the Spirit’ (Galatians 5:22-23): Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-Control.

In a church school British Values and Christian Values are inextricably linked together: The Monarch is Defender of the Faith and together with the House of Commons and the House of Lords they are the supreme authority.

“St John’s School is committed to serving its community. It recognises the multi-cultural, multi-faith and ever changing nature of the United Kingdom. It also understands the vital role it has in ensuring that groups or individuals within the school are not subjected to intimidation or radicalisation by those wishing to unduly, or illegally, influence them... There will be no discrimination against any individual or group, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status” (see British Values Policy).

Values are embedded throughout our curriculum and are at the heart of our teaching and learning. In particular we never forget that there is something unique, mysterious and potentially wonderful in everybody and this is promoted in our ethos, in the atmosphere of the school and in the way people feel valued. Children care about the well-being of others, they are generous and compassionate and understand the need for transparency and fairness for all.

Assessment and Evaluation

The process of assessment begins with the end of unit assessments carried out at the end of each half term. The ‘I Can Statements’ document is used to set appropriate differentiated assessments for the children, based on the levels of performance present in the class. Results can then be placed on the ‘tracking grids’ which show the level of attainment for each child in the class. This is in keeping with the assessment system of the school for core subjects.

Ratified: Summer 2023

Review: Summer 2024