



# The Federation of Middleham (VA) and Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools

Executive Headteacher – Mrs Marie Mann

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.  
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.  
It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8

A PLACE TO LEARN, LOVE & GROW

## Religious Education Policy

### Introduction

We believe that RE is a key part of realising our vision. RE gives the opportunity to learn, to reflect, to understand ourselves and others, to be challenged with the big questions of life, to become tolerant, to think critically, and to evaluate, as well as to learn about other faiths. It is a very special subject.

At The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools, pupils and their families can expect a high quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We use Understanding Christianity as our main scheme for learning, which supports children to develop a broad understanding of Christianity and how religious belief can impact on the day to day lives of people, we use the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus to teach other World Religions. Through the Understanding Christianity resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant Christian theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Links with our school vision, and support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

Our core aims are to provide teaching and learning opportunities through the RE curriculum that empowers the children to be:

ASPIRATIONAL  
RESPECTFUL  
RESILIENT

We believe that by having these three aims at the root, will equip our pupils to **LIVE FRUITFUL LIVES** and to **LEARN, LOVE and GROW**.

### Rationale

Religious Education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. It helps educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together.

Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person. (Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)

### Aims of the RE curriculum

We believe RE makes a significant contribution to the development of our pupils, and strongly support the aims and vision of The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools.

In our schools, Religious Education is concerned to help pupils develop open, sensitive, reflective and critical approaches to understanding humankind's varied religions and beliefs, exploring practices, values, beliefs and lifestyles, relating these to their own experiences and to questions of everyday life.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

This aim has five equal elements to it:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and beliefs represented in the UK and globally.

- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education by developing awareness of fundamental questions of life, responding to such questions with reference to religions and beliefs and reflecting on their own beliefs values and experiences.
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgments about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions and beliefs represented in the UK

Teachers will ensure teaching of RE has the federation's Christian ethos and values at its root.

### **Parental right of withdrawal from Religious Education lessons**

Parents are informed in the school prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their pupils from parts of or all religious education. Parents who choose to withdraw their children from Religious education lessons are requested to discuss the issue with the Head Teacher.

### **Effective Teaching and learning in RE**

We recognise the importance of teaching RE in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils and acknowledge children learn in many different ways, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging.

We offer opportunities for all children to learn in different ways in RE as outlined in our teaching and learning policy.

In addition to the teaching and learning policy it should be noted that unlike many other subjects, RE is a philosophical enquiry based upon the learners own perceptions and understandings of each concept, which should remain fluid and develop as the learners' progress through the cycle of learning.

Each RE topic is linked to a big question to be used as a line of enquiry to ignite curiosity.

### **Time Allocation**

RE is taught for a minimum of 36 hours per year at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two.

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus effectively, the expectation is that there is a minimum allocation of 5 percent of curriculum time for RE. This is set out below, and based on the most recent national guidance.

The time allocated for teaching RE at The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools is:

EYFS - 50 minutes a week/36 hours of tuition per year

KS1 - 1 hour a week/36 hours of tuition per year

KS2- 1.5 hours a week/45 hours of tuition per year.

Collective worship is not considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

### **Enrichment Opportunities**

To enhance our RE curriculum, where possible, we make visits to places of worship and invite in visitors to embed learning. Examples include: visits to local churches, sessions with our clergy and visitors. Where possible, we work in a cross curricular way involving literacy, drama, art, music, history, geography within our RE lessons.

Teachers may plan enrichment days to provide an opportunity for pupils to study the different religions in more details for the day, giving the opportunity to develop deep thinking, time for creative RE, real opportunities for spiritual development for pupils and new perceptions of RE for all. Enrichment days encourage them to take part in activities and challenges that are different to their normal everyday lessons.

On an RE day, pupils will have opportunities to:

- Raise and investigate questions about a religious issue or theme (e.g. creation, diversity, worship, good and evil, making our locality better, religious conflict and co-operation).
- Gather information, consider alternatives and develop thinking on the theme (e.g. by hearing from believers, researching for themselves, doing a survey, working with dilemmas).
- Encounter stimulating spiritual materials in compelling ways (e.g. using film and video creatively, performing drama, taking part in role play, hearing inspiring talk, tackling group tasks).
- Make creative, thoughtful and personal responses to the theme (e.g. in art, dance, drama, but also reasoned writing, careful thinking, deepening reflection and expression).

### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

RE is taught in Reception through child-initiated and adult led activities. RE is covered in the understanding the world area of learning, people, culture and communities, the natural world and reading. e.g. children may have met the local Vicar or someone from Church. They will be able to talk about the job that he/she does. Children may be able to talk about how baby Jesus was born a very long time ago.

In EYFS RE is also taught in People, Culture and Communities. Children may be able to talk about how much fun they had celebrating a range of different festivals throughout the year. "All the children like to have parties and special food, we tried new sweets with Adam when it was Eid."

In the natural world, *Children may share exciting moments of wonder: finding a lady bird on a leaf, exploring the softness of a feather or smelling mint in the garden.*

Where possible, first-hand accounts by visitors will be used to develop RE questions and discussion points. Adults will work alongside children to extend their learning. Learning will be documented in a big book showcasing drawings, paintings, digital photographs and the children's work.

### **Resources**

We have a range of resources to support our RE teaching that we continue to develop. Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. We maintain a RE story shelf in each classroom, which offers many stories from different traditions. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the SACRE / Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and worldviews as appropriate. A regular audit of resources takes place by the RE subject leader in order to update our collection.

### **High Quality Texts**

All classrooms have access to a range of high quality fiction and non-fiction books specific to the RE topics being taught as shown on the RE long-term plan.

### **Digital Learning**

The use of technology to support and enhance pupils' learning is a high priority in school to provide pupils with the necessary skills for the next stage of education, lives in an ever-changing digital society, future careers and ensure that the school offers excellent approach to blended and remote learning (please refer to our teaching and learning policy for more details).

In RE, teachers plan to use a range of online resources making good use of the school laptops and iPads. A range of websites will help the children develop their knowledge of the different religions. This could involve doing research, quizzes, exploring places of worship and watching religious practices.

### **Health and Safety**

We must obviously be alert to any possible dangers when working in school. It is very important that children are aware of the safe handling and storage of any tools and equipment. Risk assessments are carried out prior to any visits or visitors attending the school.

## **Equal Opportunities and Special Education Needs and Inclusion**

All children are given opportunities to access the National Curriculum requirement. All children regardless of ability, ethnicity, religion or gender, will be given equal opportunity to access all aspects of the RE curriculum. Any child experiencing difficulty in accessing part, or all, of the curriculum, will be supported with the time, materials and equipment to access the activity at their own level where this is practically possible. Planning, resources and displays will reflect positive images of all communities represented in our society.

## **Impact**

### **Assessment for Learning**

At The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools assessment is an integral part of the teaching process. The assessment of children's work is on-going to ensure that understanding is being achieved and that progress is being made. Teachers take time to review pupil knowledge, and take the time to use these assessments to inform and adapt future planning. Opportunities for pupils to make connections to deepen understanding is central to learning and this is outlined in our curriculum maps for each subject.

Feedback is given to the children as soon as possible, and marking work will be guided by the school's Marking Policy.

Teacher's update the assessment tracker half termly for English (reading, writing and phonics) and Maths and for foundation subjects following a topic (at least termly) to record progress and objectives covered.

## **Role of the RE subject leader**

### **The subject leader will:**

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- There is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

## **Self-Evaluation**

The subject leader for RE will assess and review the subject's strengths and areas for development. This will be in line with SIAMS and OFSTED guidance about self-evaluation and review.

## **Monitoring and review**

We are aware of the need to review the school teaching and learning policy regularly so that we can take account of new initiatives, pupil needs, changes in the curriculum, developments in technology or changes to the physical environment of the school