



Religious Education Policy
Implementation Date – January 2021
Review Date – January 2024

Federation Mission Statement:

To create a welcoming and inclusive environment in which all children will flourish. Every child is encouraged to care for, respect and appreciate the ultimate worth of others, developing positive relationships as they take their first steps towards becoming responsible, thoughtful and confident adults of the future, making successful contributions to their local and the global community.

Federation Values:

As federated Church of England Academies, we believe it is important to develop Christian values by which to live well together and which help to develop a moral and spiritual awareness.

Our core Christian value is Love. Across our Federation everyone is encouraged to love and respect themselves, others, God and his world. The Bible tells us that, "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." (1 John 4:16).

The value of 'Love' underpins everything we do in our Federation. We believe that through a focus on Love, by working together as part of a strong and supportive family, we can all achieve more – "Love your neighbour as yourself." Matthew 22:38

Each Academy has identified several other Christian values to explore in more detail, through acts of worship and our curriculum.

The gifts of 'Respect, Kindness, Honesty, Trust and Peace' are the values we hope and aspire that our children will foster during their time at our Infant Academy.

As our children continue their learning journey through our Junior Academy, we focus on the additional values of 'Courage, Responsibility, Creativity, Perseverance and Compassion'.

Federation Aims:

- ✚ Offer a safe and secure environment where all children are encouraged to be positive about their learning, aspire to realise their full ability and take pride in their achievements.
- ✚ Nurture, in all children, a respect for the spiritual, moral and cultural values of races, religions and ways of life different to their own, celebrating difference and diversity.
- ✚ Enable children to participate in daily acts of Collective Worship which are central to our Church Federation community, contributing towards the spiritual development of both children and adults.
- ✚ Provide high quality religious education that supports children to develop their religious literacy.
- ✚ Promote and provide inclusive "can do" practice which emphasises hope, security, stability and success for all our children.

- ✚ Help children develop lively, enquiring minds by providing a stimulating, creative and challenging curriculum in which learning is enjoyable and fun.
- ✚ Motivate and engage children through inspirational teaching which provides the children with the skills, knowledge, confidence and self-esteem that will enable them to become enthusiastic lifelong learners.
- ✚ Encourage children to care for themselves, respect each other, value their school and the community and environment in which they live.
- ✚ Value and encourage the active involvement of parents, carers and the community in supporting the education and well-being of our children.
- ✚ Continuously strive to improve as a learning community respecting the ideas and contributions of all.

RE vision statement

As a Church of England Federation, our fundamental aim is to prepare our pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern diverse Britain. Whilst the study of Christianity lies at the heart of our RE curriculum, pupils are also taught about other faiths, traditions and beliefs so that they learn to appreciate the richness and diversity of our trust, local community and the global community. Through the teachings of Jesus our pupils are taught the human values of respect and tolerance towards all others.

Rationale for RE at The Whitchurch CE Federation

Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in defining the Federation's distinctive Christian character. The SIAMS schedule 2018 (Strand 7) makes it clear that RE should reflect the Federation's Christian vision. The subject is regarded as a core subject within the Federation's curriculum. It has a vital role in developing religious literacy and deepening pupils understanding of Christianity, in all its forms, and fostering appreciation and understanding of other faith traditions. RE is non-confessional and should be treated as an academic subject in its own right.

As the Church of England document, '**Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014**' recommends that the RE curriculum in all schools should,

"..... ensure it provides a more coherent, progressive and challenging approach to the teaching of Christianity within the context of the wider exploration of the diversity of religion and belief in the modern world"

".....explore ways of extending pupils' ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry as part of their learning in RE"

The subject is central to the Federation's understanding of education and mission, and the commitment that the 'the Church at national, diocesan and local level is called to work towards every child and young person having a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ' (Going for Growth Report).

RE Statement of Entitlement

RE teaching at The Whitchurch CE Federation is in line with the recommendations of the Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools, published by the Church of England Education Office (Feb 2019), see link below:

<http://smartfile.s3.amazonaws.com/d57a4d93b010f2ac6f24bc8cee2d789e/uploads/2019/02/NEW-RE-Statement-of-Entitlement-for-Church-schools.pdf>

Christianity will, therefore, be at least 50% of RE curriculum time. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of RE in this Church of England Federation. However, as a Church Federation we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also learn to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own ideas and beliefs. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice and discrimination.

The RE curriculum

RE teaching also follows the legal requirements of the **Education Reform Act (1988)**, which places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement for all pupils. The Federation bases its RE provision on the Shropshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. In addition, the Federation uses the Lichfield Diocese RE Guidance exemplar units, Understanding Christianity resource and other appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning.

At least 5% (closer to 10%) of curriculum time will be dedicated to meeting explicitly RE objectives, although the subject may be taught across the curriculum when appropriate. Within this teaching allocation at least 50% of subject content will be allocated to an exploration of the Christian faith, and the concepts, beliefs, teachings and practices that lie at its heart.

The aims of Religious Education in our Federation are:

- To help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with text.
- To help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide.
- To enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture.
- To give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- To help pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of religious texts and teachings and understanding their impact on the lives of believers.
- To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief, of themselves, the world and human experience.

- To develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth, and so to consider important human questions, values and concerns.
- To nurture understanding, respect and open-mindedness and inspire lifelong engagement with the study of religions and beliefs.

The outcomes for pupils at the end of their time in our Federation are that they are able to:

- Compare and contrast the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied and show how they are connected to believers' lives
- Describe different aspects of belonging to a religion – symbol, story, festival, belief, faith in action, ritual, worship
- Express religious beliefs and ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology and describe what they mean
- Ask questions sensitively about the lives of believers and suggest appropriate answers
- Reflect on the decisions people make – including believers – and suggest possible outcomes
- Compare their own experience and identity with others – including believers
- Reflect and empathise with the big questions of life, suggesting some answers / insights
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth
- Value the religious journey of faith
- Develop pupils' ability to interpret and appreciate religious imagery and expression

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

In addition, the subject contributes to other areas of education and human experience and plays an important part of the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Spiritual	Widening pupils' vision of themselves and their own experience, within the context of a growing awareness and understanding of God.
Moral	helping each pupil develop their own informed values
Social	helping pupils understand some major forces shaping the values of our society
Cultural	aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

Additional links will be found across the curriculum especially with **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Relationships and Sex Education** and **British values**. RE can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and ensure the well-being of all pupils.

Right to Withdraw

At The Whitchurch CE Federation, we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship. Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the Head of School who will then invite the parents into the academies to

discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the RE and worship provided by the academy and set out the options open to the parents as set out in education law. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects. Where a pupil is withdrawn from RE and do not take part in alternative religious education they will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff whilst doing work set by their parents which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parent's beliefs and values.

The management of RE

RE is given equal status to other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects. Teachers should share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development (SIAMS 2018).

As a Church Federation we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE.

The RE subject leader is responsible for:

- producing a scheme of work for the Federation
- supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision
- ensuring Religious Education has status within the Federation
- keeping in touch with subject developments and disseminating information as appropriate
- auditing and recording current resources, supplementing resource provision when money is available and disseminating this information to staff
- undertaking personal development and subject training and ensuring provision for staff INSET
- monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes
- ensuring rigorous systems of assessment are in place (SIAMS 2018) and are in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus
- creating the RE Development Plan and ensuring its regular review
- accountability for RE standards in the Federation
- meet with member of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible

Current RE Practice and Principles

- The long term plan for RE is based on the Lichfield Diocese RE Guidance suggested model in order to provide a spiral curriculum in which pupils constantly revisit key concepts and build upon prior learning.
- RE is taught by class teachers.
- RE lessons are planned taking into account the needs of all pupils, including SEN and more able pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, RE forms a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the key stage. During the foundation stage, children may begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They may be introduced to religious words and use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They

reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live. Foundation Stage 2 use the Understanding Christianity resource and Lichfield Diocese RE Guidance exemplar additional units for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- In EYFS pupils will complete a range of tasks in class and teachers will record children's observations and responses. The class learning journey will be shared in a floor book. Teachers will provide feedback to children throughout their learning journey to support their ongoing development.
- As a Church Federation at least 50% of teaching is Christianity. In EYFS and Key Stage 1, Christianity and at least one other focus religion is taught. In Key Stage 2 Christianity and at least two other religions are taught.
- At The Whitchurch CE Federation, we believe that Religious Education should be an exciting subject across all phases and so we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, drama, discussion, use of ICT, exploring artefacts, foods, pictures, photographs, visiting places of worship and listening to people from different faith groups. Learning is recorded not only through a range of writing e.g. letters, diaries and recounts, stories, notes, information and explanation writing but also through pictures and artwork, photographs of drama or notes following class discussions.
- Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils have individual work books for RE.
- Pupils are assessed on their prior knowledge at the beginning of a new unit of work using a 'knowledge harvest'. They are then re-assessed after they have completed the unit using the Salisbury Diocese assessment approach. Pupils are judged as emerging, expected or exceeding.
- The quality of RE teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated through Performance Management, lesson observations, pupil voice interviews and 'book looks'.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

At The Whitchurch CE Federation, we assess pupil's knowledge and understanding of core concepts in religions and belief. In addition, we assess pupil's development of a range of investigative and evaluative skills, including analysis, interpretation and reflection.

Short-term assessment

Day-to-day assessment for learning includes questioning, formative feedback/response, more in-depth marking which moves learning on in RE. For those pupils who do not show secure learning, teaching is adapted in order to present the material in a new way that will encourage the expected attainment or better - thus ensuring progression in understanding key concept for as many pupils as possible.

Half termly/end of unit assessment

At the end of a unit a teacher judgement is made against success criteria based on knowledge and understanding of a core concept and skills development, using the Salisbury Diocese assessment approach. Pupils are judged as emerging, expected

or exceeding. Individual pupil assessments are then added to the Federation's DC Pro pupil progress tracking system.

End of year assessment and reporting

Individual pupil progress in RE is tracked over the year using the Federation's DC Pro tracking system. A final teacher judgement is made based on this overview of assessments carried out throughout the year. Parents receive feedback on pupil's achievements, progress and attainment in RE in the pupil's annual school report.

Equal Opportunities

All children are given access to the same learning opportunities. Account is taken of children with special educational needs through differentiation of task and outcome and a planned balance of class teaching and group work and providing resources of different complexity. All pupils should be able to feel secure in their study of Religious Education whatever the religious or non-religious tradition of their home.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Appendix 1: An Example of the medium term/end of unit assessment approach used for RE.

Appendix One

Lower Key Stage 2	Core Concept: Incarnation/God	
	Question: What is the Trinity?	
	Core Curriculum content:	
Knowledge and understanding is	<p>Secure/Expected</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils know that Christians believe God is Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father creates; he sends the Son who saves his people; and the Holy Spirit on his people. Christians believe the Holy Spirit is God's power at work in the world and in their lives today, enabling them to follow Jesus Pupils know that Christians often try to describe God using symbols, similes, and metaphors, in song, story, poems and art and have created art to help to express this belief. Pupils know the story of Jesus Baptism (Matthew 3; 11-17) including that Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist that a voice came from above and the dove appeared. They know the symbolism this suggests. Pupils can describe a Christian Baptism (child and adult) including the terminology of 'in the name of the father, the son and the Holy spirit' 	
Pupils		
Knowledge and understanding is	<p>Developing/Emerging</p> <p>Pupils know that Christians believe God is Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That Christians often try to describe God using symbols, similes, and metaphors, in song, story, poems and art and have created art to help to express this belief. They can talk about the Baptism of Christ but are not able to explain the story's significance. They can talk about some aspects of Christian Baptism</p> 	<p>Excelling</p> <p>Using this knowledge and understanding pupils can raise relevant questions in response to their enquiry into the Christian concept of The Trinity. Pupils are able to discuss the idea of God being three in one. They can explore links between the Baptism of Christ and can make connections to the 'Big Story' of Christianity. They recognise that for Christians understanding God is challenging; people spend their whole lives learning more and more about God.</p> 
Pupils		
	Pupils with additional needs have made the following responses	