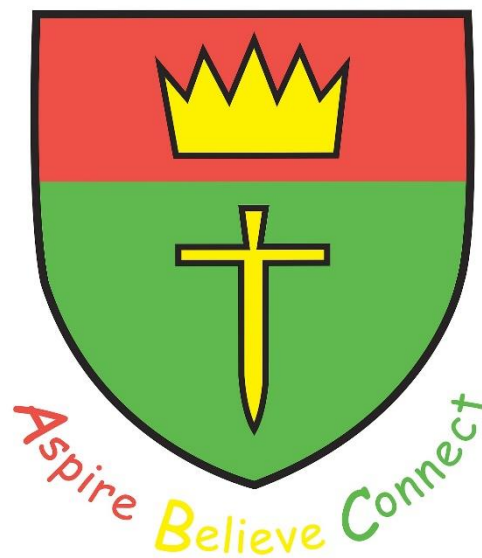


# RE Policy



**St Oswald's Church of England Primary School**

# St Oswald's CE VA Primary School

## RE Policy:

Principles and Implementation

Agreed by governors: Sept 2022

Implementation date: Oct 2022

Review date: Oct 2025

### Vision, Ethos and Values Statement



### Background

Our Vision, Ethos and Values Statement is an easy to understand model of religious education in St Oswald's. Children in our school know that love is the most important value of all, in line with the new command that Jesus gave us to love one another ([John 13:34](#)), which is why this is placed above all in our statement.

### Vision

Our school vision is 'God has a plan' ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)). At St Oswald's, we believe

that God has a wonderful plan for us all and we seek to discover that plan on a daily basis, weaving this into our school values and all aspects of school.

### *Ethos*

Sitting below love lies our school's ethos: *Aspire, Believe, Connect*. As easy as A, B, C, this statement is easy to remember and most importantly represents what we want our children to do in every aspect of their education and lives.

### *Core Christian Values*

The mission statement is underpinned by seven core Christian values that each link to one aspect of *Aspire, Believe, Connect*. As children aspire to be the best they can be in every way, they will grow in wisdom. In order to believe in themselves and develop their own beliefs about the world around them, our children are taught about the importance of trust and strength on their journey. We also believe in the values of peace and friendship in helping us to connect with those around us. Binding together all of these and very much at the heart of our values - and indeed the Christian gospel/Jesus' teaching - is love ([John 3:16](#); [Mark 12:31](#)).

### **Religious Education and our Vision, Ethos and Values**

RE is at the heart of our curriculum at St Oswald's: this is clear for all stakeholders and those visiting our school by the fact that we begin every week with the subject, which has a full morning of learning dedicated to it. At the heart of all RE learning and teaching (and indeed all learning and teaching across the school) are our school vision, ethos and values.

Our school Bible verse, Jeremiah 29:11, is referred to within RE lessons when helping children to establish a greater understanding of the 'big picture' of Christianity. At St Oswald's, we believe that all learning is about growth that comes from discussions and seeing all learning as a journey that we can take alongside others, in line with the theory of the Growth Mindset (Dweck 1989). This is represented in the way our RE mornings are structured, as discussing the big question of the morning before responding more formally to it give children the opportunity to grow and develop their understanding. Through these discussions, peace and friendship are encouraged as we all look to respect one another's views and connect with each other in ways that are not always possible in other aspects of the curriculum. RE also provides us with opportunities to discuss and evaluate the how trustworthy and useful given sources of evidence and people's testimonies of faith are.

RE really does drive learning and teaching in our school. Initiatives such as centring lessons around our core values, assessing progress using "Know, Understand, Evaluate" and lessons centred around a big question have all come initially from RE and then fed into other aspects of the curriculum, including the core subjects.

### **Long term planning**

The long term plan is set by the RE coordinator at the start of the year. This plan is formulated using the *Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education*, which is centred around the Understanding Christianity resource for Christianity units and follows a mirrored approach for the other major world faiths. The plan outlines which units should be taught during which term, and takes into consideration major Christian festivals with regards to when units will be covered. Units focused around all other major world faiths are taught across the year, but largely fall in the summer term, and these are distinguishable in red and green on the plan itself. Whenever possible, we facilitate opportunities for further world faiths and beliefs learning to occur whilst a Christianity unit is under way, for instance in order to mark particular religious festivals or for multi-belief debate mornings.

### **Learning and Teaching**

#### *When RE is taught*

RE lessons happen across a full Monday morning across the whole school. The reason for this is because we feel passionately that, as a church school, RE is at the forefront of our curriculum. Having two full sessions, giving a total weekly teaching time of at least two hours, provides the opportunity for the big question of the session to be discussed in full and responded to appropriately without feeling that any content or activities need to be rushed.

#### *Discussions and written tasks*

The minimum two hours of RE are split in half in most instances. The first of these sessions is more discussion-based to allow for lesson content to be outlined, questions to be asked, opinions to be raised and personal reflection (see SMSC Policy for more). These discussions will be recorded into the RE Floor Book (see below). Following discussions in the second session, differentiated independent response tasks will be set, which may be a piece of written or artistic work, or

something digital to be completed on Seesaw, for instance, in line with the lesson's big question. This activity will give children to consolidate their understanding from the discussion and work more independently towards answering the big question.

## **RE Floor Books**

RE Floor Books are used to evidence discussions, primarily. These large books will show the statements, questions, understanding, opinions and views that arise from discussions, providing a highly visual log of RE discussions. These books may also be used to evidence examples of drama-based activities or any others that were more suitable to record on large pages than in RE books. The minimum expectation is that there will be evidence in *either* RE books *or* the RE Floor Book for a given Monday, but usually there will be evidence found across both for any given full morning session.

## **Assessment**

### *Success criteria*

The success criteria of 'Know, Understand, Evaluate' is used to assess children's level of understanding of a lesson/unit's big question. These criteria, now consistent across all curriculum subjects at St Oswald's, were first developed in RE and have since, emphasising the previous point around RE driving learning, teaching and assessment across the whole school.

### *Initial assessment*

In line with our school's Learning and Teaching Policy, all RE learning begins with a 'cold task'. Children will be asked the big question for the unit before any learning has taken place, allowing staff to assess the varying starting points of those in their class according to success criteria, ready for learning and teaching to begin.

### *Ongoing assessment*

Staff will assess children across an RE unit and record their findings on impact sheets. The impact sheets inform the planning of further RE lessons and groupings, and will again be according to 'Know, Understand, Evaluate' in relation to big questions.

### *End of unit assessment*

At the end of a unit, all children will be set a final assessment task in which they will be expected to answer the unit's big question. A final discussion takes place prior to the children's independent task, allowing final assessments to be informed by both verbal and written understanding, allowing those children who have specific needs relating to writing to achieve their full RE potential. End of unit assessment information is submitted to the RE coordinator at the end of every term, who will then collate this information and produce termly RE data sheets that are fed back to staff. Staff can then identify children who may require further support in following terms.

### *Whole School RE Data*

The RE coordinator monitors the termly data across the school year. At the end of a school year, children are awarded an overall attainment grade in RE (Below Expected Standard, Expected Standard or Greater Depth) and an overview across the school is compiled. The RE coordinator will analyse this overview, which includes looking at different groups such as gender/SEND/FSM etc. and decide upon any actions moving forward based on what the data is saying.

### **Monitoring**

The RE coordinator monitors learning and teaching within RE on a termly basis. Monitoring can be done by lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny, display walks, pupil voice or staff voice. There will always be a main focus of any monitoring, decided by the RE coordinator, that will link to the RE action plan or as a response to something seen at management level across the school year, with the purpose always being to have a positive impact upon children's wellbeing and learning within RE lessons.

### **CPD**

The RE coordinator attends subject leader meetings and also delivers training to staff. Staff are made aware of RE training courses available and take up these opportunities in order to upskill themselves within the subject.

As a school, we have an excellent relationship with Caroline Weir, the RE Advisor for the North East, and she is always on hand to support with RE CPD. Likewise, we as a school have been able to support Caroline in her work, helping other

schools with their RE provision and providing examples of work to be used for moderation purposes.

### **Home-Learning**

As the home may be the greatest source of a child's knowledge and understanding of RE, it is appropriate to set home-learning tasks related to developing and sharing their understanding. Alongside other aspects of our broad St Oswald's curriculum, RE-based 'Talk Homework' tasks are set by class teachers, with the recommendation being at least once a term.

### **Role of the Co-ordinator**

There is a named co-ordinator responsible for co-ordinating the teaching of RE throughout the school. Within Andrew Richardson's role, he:

- provides support, advice and resources to members of staff;
- monitors learning and teaching within RE,
- revises policies and supports staff with planning and assessment of RE where necessary;
- attends relevant training and support staff through the delivery of training sessions;
- organises visitors to deliver CPD for staff;
- liaises with other schools to continue to improve RE provision at St Oswald's;
- supports other schools to share in what has worked for us;
- monitors the use and need of resources throughout the school.

### **Resources**

High-quality resources are crucial to effective RE teaching. A range of excellent paper-based and digital resources for teaching Christianity units are provided within the Understanding Christianity resource pack. One key resource that is used as frequently as possible in RE learning and teaching is the 'Big Frieze', an artistic depiction of the Bible produced by Emma Yarlett. This is to be used as a means of engaging children in the Bible and developing their understanding of its narrative (the 'Big Story').

There is a broad selection of books to support the teaching of RE available to all staff on a shelf of their own in the Staff Room. Staff are encouraged to take these for as long as they need before returning them to their central location.



In terms of physical resources and religious artefacts, we have a selection of items in school to support in the teaching of Christian traditions and other world faiths. For further physical resources and religious artefacts, St Oswald's are members of the North East Religious Resources Centre (<https://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/>). Teaching staff are encouraged and directed to plan ahead in terms of resources before delivering a given unit so that they can contact the centre and enquire about loan boxes/items that would support in learning and teaching. These boxes/items can be loaned for the duration of a teaching unit and returned at the end.

## **Displays**

When you walk into St Oswald's, it's impossible to miss that we are a Church of England school, and a big reason for this is the high profile we place on faith in our displays. Whether the collective worship displays in the hall or the RE displays in corridors and classrooms, it's clear to see the importance of religion and faith to the St Oswald's school community. RE Floor Books, available at all times, add to displays by showcasing some of the discussions and work that has been taking place in RE lessons.

## **Educational visits and visitors in school**

Educational visits are encouraged and directed in line with taught RE units. Again, the North East Religious Resources Centre (<https://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk/>) is able to provide the RE co-ordinator and teaching staff with suggested places to visit depending upon the faith/unit being taught. Equally, visitors are encouraged to come into school to speak about their own faith and practices, again in line with units being taught.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or special need or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multi-cultural society which we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any pupil, helping our learners be ready for life in modern-day Britain.

## **Role of stakeholders in policy**



All stakeholders have a role to play in this policy. On agreement of the expectations, staff are to ensure that RE is taught and assessed as outlined in this policy and that their classrooms are places where open discussion is encouraged. Teaching staff are also expected to encourage engagement with the school vision, ethos and values through RE and to plan ahead with regards to resources and visits/visitors as outlined in this policy.

Governors also have a responsibility to support and uphold our school's Ethos and Values Statement in relation to RE. There is a named governor who supports in the monitoring and championing of RE across the school.

Parents are encouraged to support learning in RE by encouraging children to show develop positive attitudes towards their RE learning both in school and at home. Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from any or all RE lessons. This can be done in writing and following a discussion with the RE lead.