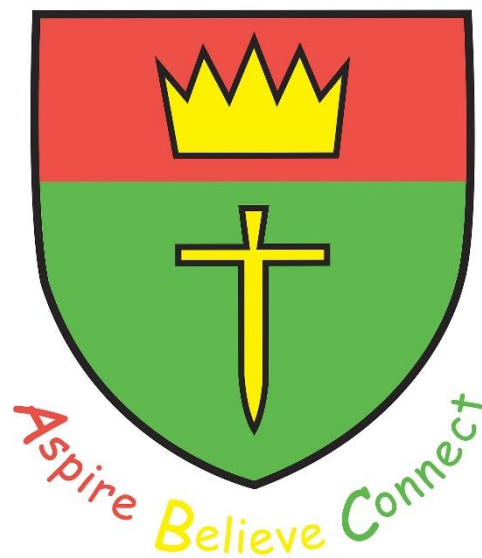


RE Policy



St Oswald's Church of England Primary School

St Oswald's CE VA Primary School

RE Policy:

Principles and Implementation

Agreed by Governors: Nov 2025

Implementation Date: Nov 2025

Review Date: Nov 2028

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 simple to remember and most importantly represents what we want our children to do in every aspect of their education and lives.

Core Christian Values

Our vision and ethos are 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 dedicate two hours every week to the subject. 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 lessons are structured, as both discussing the big question and responding more formally to it gives 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 drives learning and teaching in our school. It has been the leading subject in all lessons centring around big questions through an enquiry-based approach, whilst RE discussion sessions specifically support our whole-school focus on oracy. Our recent drive towards quality over quantity also came from RE monitoring initially, further demonstrating the importance of the subject in driving teaching learning across the whole curriculum.

The Overall Aim of RE

The overall aim of RE at St Oswald's is to teach pupils to have the ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs. This aim is aligned to the Durham Diocese's overall aim for RE and is outlined right at the top of our RE Intent Statement. Informing our children about a range of different beliefs - whether religious or not - then allows the children to have respectful and balanced conversations with one another around a range of age-appropriate topics.

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, again clearly outlined on the long term plan.

Teaching and Learning

Big Questions

All RE lessons centre around a 'big question'. These either come directly from or are formulated using the aforementioned resources and the ultimate aim of any

given session is for the children to be able to respond to the big question, in line with the overall aim of RE.

Hours Per Week

RE is typically taught for two hours per week in every class at St Oswald's. This exceeds the requirements in the RE Statement of Entitlement, but we feel it is important to set the bar high in all typical weeks so that when the unexpected happens and/or there is a particularly busy week, we know that plenty of RE teaching and learning has already taken place. The key message to all stakeholders is clear: RE is an extremely high priority subject in our school.

When RE is Taught

RE lessons can be taught at any time during the week at the choosing of teachers, but typically occur on afternoons and across a full afternoon so that discussion and task sessions flow naturally from one to the other. Our backstory is that previously, all classes had RE on a Monday morning, which at the time was to give the subject ultimate priority over all others. However, after monitoring around engagement in the subject, we came away from this requirement when it was found that enthusiasm towards the subject fell when it was taught as the first lesson of the week following a weekend. An increase in enthusiasm and engagement followed the change to RE being taught on afternoons of teachers' choosing.

Discussions and Independent 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, with children and adults alike developing their oracy skills in the process. These discussions will be recorded into the RE Floor Book (see below) or onto Seesaw. Following discussions in the second session, 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 in response to the big question. This approach allows children to thoroughly meet the overall aim of RE at St Oswald's.

Evidencing Work

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 research, drama-based activities or any other tasks that were more suitable to record on large pages than in RE books. RE books are primarily where children will complete independent, written response tasks, with teaching staff setting a given task that will help children to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the lesson's big question. The minimum expectation is that there will be evidence in *either* RE books *or* the RE Floor Book for a given week, but usually there will be evidence found across both.

Adaptations

At St Oswald's, we use adaptive teaching (as opposed to differentiation). Whilst the expectation is that all children work towards responding to the same big question in any given lesson or unit, their paths there will all differ. Therefore, teaching staff are expected to make adaptations to support and challenge children in achieving their maximum potential in RE. These adaptations may include reducing barriers to RE learning, such as support with reading texts, or indeed pushing higher ability learners on to 'delve deeper' by evaluating a given big question across a broad range of faiths.

Assessment

Initial Assessments

In line with our school's Learning and Teaching Policy, all RE learning begins with a 'cool task', centring around recall of prior knowledge related to the upcoming unit. These tasks allow teaching staff to assess the starting points of children 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.

End of Unit Assessments

At the end of a unit, all children will be set a final 'gold task' in which they will be expected to respond to 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, meaning those children who have specific needs relating to writing can still 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 within the expected standard) and an overview across the school is compiled. The RE coordinator will analyse this overview and decide upon any actions and key priorities moving forward for the following year's RE action plan 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.

Knowledge Retention

Knowledge retention is vital in RE in order that children can meet the overall aim of RE (specifically the 'informed' aspect) and build on prior learning, as opposed to needing to be retaught content each unit/year. Aforementioned cool tasks both assess and encourage knowledge retention from previous learning at the beginning of units, whilst weekly RE early work slots every Wednesday morning support pupils' recall of key learning in the subject. Through well-planned tasks, staff are expected to provide opportunities for children to apply previous learning to new learning, something the RE coordinator and leadership team provide training around.

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. The RE coordinator also provides in-house training for staff, feeding back to them training that he has attended and also running his own personal training based on his own experience and understanding of the school, having worked at St Oswald's in the role for over a decade himself.

Worldviews

The RE coordinator has attended training around 'worldviews' and has been conducting his own research into this term and the related 'Religions and Worldviews Approach', too. The term 'worldviews' is relatively embryonic to the school, with children in UKS2 delving into the term and considering their own personal worldviews in light of those of others presented to them. An early, age-appropriate definition of a worldview at St Oswald's is 'the way we see the world, including our beliefs, values and ideas'. We anticipate that this terminology and concept will develop further in years to come and are excited to add this extra element to our RE teaching and learning.

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 Coordinator

There is a named coordinator responsible for coordinating 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. Included in these are resources like Picturing Christianity and Picturing Islam.

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 is able to provide the RE coordinator 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. School works closely with parents and carers who have special requests regarding RE.

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.