



Ebchester C.E. Primary School

RE Policy

September 2023

Ebchester CE Primary School

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‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ – Matthew 22:39

‘At Ebchester CE Primary School, love lies at the centre of everything we do. Following the example set by Jesus, we create a culture of compassion. Every individual is valued, respected and cared for so that pupils can flourish into successful learners, caring individuals and responsible citizens’.

At Ebchester CE Primary School we aim to develop the religious literacy in all our children so that they can be active and responsible members of our local, national and global communities. Our RE education provides challenging and proactive questions which allow our children to consider the ultimate means and purposes of life, beliefs about God and self, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. Our RE curriculum creates well-rounded, resilient and respectful children who are prepared to encounter life’s challenges in the wider world.

Our RE curriculum aims to develop a thorough theological understanding of Christianity and the Bible. By studying eight core themes of the Bible (God, Creation, Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God), our children will understand the importance of these themes in the Bible, the impact these have had on Christian communities, and they will make connections between these themes and their own experiences. They will be able to make clear links between Bible texts and core themes, how Christians show their beliefs in worship, and raise questions and suggest answers to the big ideas explored in the Bible.

Our RE curriculum also teaches our children about world faiths including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism, as well as non-religious views. When studying other religions, our children will be similarly equipped with the skills knowledge and understanding the core themes of the religions and how these themes have impacted the lives of worshippers. They will learn about the main themes of the religions including their perception of God, their holy book and their rites, rituals and festivals. Whilst studying these, they will consider the links between other faiths, Christianity, and the beliefs of people with no faith. This religious literacy will allow our children to think critically and compassionately about others and develop an understanding of the different cultures they will encounter when they leave our school.

As a Church of England School, our desire for religious literacy is not confined to classroom lessons. Instead, we aim to provide children with opportunities to develop their compassion, friendship and respect for others in a variety of extracurricular activities. We encourage our children to be advocates for change by recognising and acting on inequalities. This fosters a sense of duty and service which is at the heart of the Anglican faith and it allows our children to consider their responsibilities and attitudes in relation to their community.

Aims

At Ebchester CE Primary School, our principal aim is to enable pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief.

This principal aim incorporates the following aims of Religious Education in Church schools¹:

- 'To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and non-religious worldviews, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

Appropriate to their age at the end of their education in Church schools, our expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and non-religious worldviews in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.'

Teaching and Learning

As a VC school, we at Ebchester CE Primary School follow the teaching and learning framework as set out in the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Durham. This syllabus supports teachers to help pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs.

The syllabus is underpinned by three core elements:

Making Sense of Beliefs – identifying and making sense of core religious and non-religious concepts and beliefs; understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions; recognising how and why sources of authority are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, and developing skills of interpretation.

Understanding the Impact – Examining how and why people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, within their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.

Making Connections – Reasoning about, reflecting on, evaluating and connecting the concepts, beliefs and practices studied; allowing pupils to challenge ideas, and the ideas to challenge pupils' thinking; discerning possible connections between these ideas and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

When studying Christianity, pupils at Ebchester CE Primary will encounter eight core concepts. The core concepts are developed across each phase with children building on prior learning of each concept. The eight concepts are:

¹ As taken from *Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement* 2016.

God	The Creator and Deity for Christians.
Creation	Christians believe the universe and human life are God's good creation. Humans are made in the image of God.
Fall	Humans have a tendency to go their own way rather than keep their place in relation to their creator. Christians call this attitude sin, and Genesis 3 gives an account of this rebellion, popularly called 'the Fall'. This describes a catastrophic separation between God and humans, between humans and each other, and between humans and the environment. This idea that humans are 'fallen' and in need of rescue (or salvation) sets out the root cause of many problems for humanity.
People of God	The Old Testament tells the story of God's plan to reverse the impact of the Fall, to save humanity. It involves choosing a people who will model a restored relationship with God, who will attract all other people back to God. The Bible narrative includes the ups and downs of this plan, including the message of the prophets who tried to persuade people to stick with God. The plan appears to end in failure with the people of God exiled, and then returning, awaiting a 'messiah' - a rescuer.
Incarnation	The New Testament presents Jesus as the answer: the Messiah and Saviour, who will repair the effects of sin and the Fall and offer a way for humans to be at one with God again. For Christians, Incarnation means that Jesus is God in the flesh, and that, in Jesus, God came to live among humans.
Gospel	Christians believe Jesus' incarnation is 'good news' for all people. His life, teaching and ministry embody what it is like to be one of the people of God, what it means to live in relationship with God. Jesus' examples and teaching emphasis loving one's neighbour – particularly the weak and vulnerable – as part of loving God.
Salvation	Jesus' death and resurrection effect the rescue (or salvation) of humans. Christians say he opens the way back to God. Through Jesus, sin is dealt with, forgiveness offered, and the relationship between God and humans is restored.
Kingdom of God	This does not mean that no one sins any more! The idea of the 'Kingdom of God' reflects God's ideal for human life in the world – a vision of life lived in the way God intended for human beings. In anticipation of a future heavenly Kingdom, Christians seek to live this attractive life as in God's Kingdom on earth, following Jesus' example, inspired and empowered by God's Spirit.

As well as learning about Christianity, pupils also learn about world faiths and other beliefs throughout the year. Due to having mixed age classes, the RE curriculum in Ebchester CE Primary School runs on a two-year cycle. In the first year of the cycle, each KS1 and KS2 class learns about a world faith for an entire term. KS1 learn about Buddhism, lower-KS2 learn about Hinduism and upper-KS2 learn about Judaism. In the second year of the cycle, children in each class have 'thematic' modules in which a theme (for example, pilgrimage, celebrations, places) is studied across two or more world faiths.

Entitlement and the Law

Based upon the *Statement of Entitlement* (2016), Ebchester CE Primary School has allocated amounts of time for RE to be taught in each phase. These are:

EYFS	36 hours of RE tuition a year (50 minutes a week and sometimes as part of continuous provision).
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KS1	36 hours of RE tuition a year (one hour a week for majority of the year plus longer extended lessons/trips).
KS2	45 hours of RE tuition a year (one hour and a quarter per week for majority of the year plus longer extended lessons/trips).

Every child has an entitlement to Religious Education and it is part of both the National Curriculum and the school's broad and balanced curriculum. Parents do have a right to withdraw their child from part or all of our RE provision. If you would like to withdraw your children from an RE lesson or the RE curriculum as a whole, please contact the Head Teacher (Mrs Clasper) or Assistant Head Teacher and RE Leader (Mr Carr).

Assessment

Children in KS1 and KS2 are assessed in their RE learning. Assessment is judged based on the teaching and learning throughout each key stage. Every half term, children in every class will study one of the above eight core concepts, a religious thematic strand which crosses many religions and beliefs, or a world faith. Each of these modules comes with a set of assessment criteria which the teacher will judge every child against. At the end of the year, the teacher will take their judgements from the entire year and judge whether a child is below the expected standard, at the expected standard, or working at greater depth within the expected standard.

These assessments are collated by the subject leader and analysed to identify underachieving and successful groups of children. This information is then used to inform future teaching of the subject.

Subject Leader²

The role of the subject leader:

Policy, knowledge and development

- Prepare a school policy
- Whole school plan and schemes of work which cater for progression
- Select religions to be studied from the options at each key stage
- Ensure that curriculum time is sufficient
- Devise appropriate procedures for planning, assessment, recording and reporting pupils' work in line with the whole school policy
- Ensure SEN, EAL and gifted and talented school policies are promoted in RE
- Promote RE with staff, pupils, parents and governors
- Promote display of pupils' work in RE
- Audit available resources, buy new ones and deploy appropriately
- Keep up-to-date with local and national developments

Monitoring

- Review, monitor and evaluate provision and the practice of RE
- Identify trends, make comparisons and know about different groups

² Taken from *Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle: Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education* (2018), p.9

- Monitor planning, checking for clarity of outcomes and aspects of differentiation
- Provide observation feedback and report on findings
- Sample pupils' work
- Evaluate outcomes for pupils in RE for progress and attainment
- Set overall school targets for improvement.

Supporting and Advising

- Prepare a subject action plan, including short- and long-term targets and a funding policy, which builds on existing practice and strives for continuous improvement
- Lead curriculum development and ensure staff development through courses, in-school meetings and training
- Keep up-to-date with new developments and resources
- Support non-specialist teachers and staff
- Work alongside colleagues to demonstrate good practice
- Prepare statements about RE for parent and governors, as required
- Ensure parents and children are involved in the process.