St John’s CE Primary School
Religious Education Policy

The Legal Position  St John’s CE Primary School, in accordance with its Trust Deed, provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. Following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the Governors supported that religious education in our school will be based upon the Pan-Berkshire Agreed syllabus, which is facilitated, by us, through the Discovery curriculum. Religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this, as to other subjects.

Aims of Religious Education  Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect upon some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. It allows children in our school to ask about the meaning and purpose in life, from beginning to end. At St John’s we endeavour to give our children the space for individual reflection, wondering, thinking about the who and why. We give our children chances to explore Christianity, other principal religions and world views, and how they affect the fabric of personal, social and emotional life. We help our children learn from religions as well as about religions. We endeavour to help our children understand what it is to be a person of faith in today’s pluralistic world, as well as respecting the thoughts and rights of those who follow no specific faith.

Religious education aims to help pupils to:
● provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human
● acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and other world views represented in Great Britain today
● develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
● have time and space to have personal reflection and spiritual development; to be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life
● reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief and faith and ethics and to communicate their responses
● develop their sense of belonging and identity
● flourish individually within their communities and as citizens of a pluralistic society and a global community
● develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions

The purpose of religious education does not include any attempt to alter a child’s beliefs. Indeed, reflecting the inclusive ethos of our school, our religious education programme is designed not ‘to convert pupils or urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils’.

Planning and Delivery The religious education curriculum is based on two key aspects of learning laid down in the locally agreed syllabus. The agreed syllabus is based on ‘big questions’ with explicit links made between ‘Belonging, Believing and Behaving’ as well as links made explicit about learning from religion as well as learning about religion. Our school also follow the Discovery scheme of work. Teachers use these strands when planning their lessons. As suggested in the aims of the subject, all pupils will learn about Christianity and other world faiths with Christianity being clearly predominate. The aim for our RE learning is to be an enquiry based approach to learning, where pupils are invited to explore, question, draw links and make comparisons. Children will therefore explore different religions and worldviews in relation to a number of key questions in each key stage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year group</th>
<th>Enquiry based questions</th>
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| **EYFS**   | ● What makes people special?  
           | ● What is Christmas?        
           | ● How do people celebrate?  
           | ● What is Easter?           
           | ● What can we learn from stories?  
           | ● What makes places special?  |
| **Year 1** | ● Who made the world?       
           | ● Why does Christmas matter to Christians?  
           | ● Was it always easy for Jesus to show friendship?  
           | ● Why does Easter matter to Christians?  
           | ● Is Shabbat important to Jewish children?  
           | ● Are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur important to all Jewish children?  |
| **Year 2** | ● Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time?  
           | ● What is the good news that Jesus brings?  
           | ● Does praying at regular intervals every day help a Muslim in his/her daily life?  
           | ● What do Christians believe God is like?  
           | ● Does going to Mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?  
           | ● Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?  |
| **Year 3/Year 4** | ● Would celebrating at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?  
           | ● What is the Trinity?  
           | ● What do Christians learn from the Creation story?  
           | ● Why do Christians call the day Jesus died ‘Good Friday’?  
           | ● How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?  
           | ● Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?  |
| **Year 5** | ● How special is the relationship Jews have with God  
           | ● What is it like for Christians to follow God?  
           | ● How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?  
           | ● Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?  
           | ● What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?  
           | ● When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost?  |
| **Year 6** | ● How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion?  
           | ● Is the Christmas story true?  
           | ● Are Sikh stories important today?  
           | ● How significant is it for Christians to believe God intended Jesus to die?  
           | ● What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?  
           | ● What is the best way for a Christian to show commitment to God?  |
| **Year 6** | ● What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?  
           | ● How significant is it that Mary was Jesus mother?  
           | ● Is anything ever eternal?  
           | ● Is Christianity still a strong religion 2000 years after Jesus was on Earth?  
           | ● Does belief in Akhirah (life after death) help Muslims lead good lives  |
‘I came that they may have life and have it abundantly...’ John 10.10 (NRSV – Bible)

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Cross Curricular links  We try to make RE lessons as cross-curricular as possible and will often link them through other lessons such as literacy, ICT, PSHE and art. Opportunities to use RE as a form and vehicle for writing, debating, role play is vast and every opportunity will be made to make explicit links across subjects. RE often involves many aspects of PSHE, as we explore our own identity as well as the need to listen to and respect other’s viewpoints and beliefs. Our RE also seeks to embrace and teach many aspects of British Values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Teaching, Learning and Achievement  Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes required by the locally agreed syllabus: self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder. This is all achieved within the Discovery syllabus. These work alongside, and are often linked to our school values of Respect, Empathy, Hope, Trust and Wonder.

Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

We use a variety of approaches to engage pupils of differing needs and backgrounds. We aim to teach RE through discussions, debates, music, writing, drama, visual arts and computing. We give pupils time to reflect by themselves as well as with others and to ask and investigate and explore their own questions. We aim to enable the children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Diwali, Easter, Passover, Eid, etc to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school to talk to the children.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

Assessment  We assess children’s work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We may mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work or a line of enquiry, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in each class in relation to the expectations of the unit. We use these as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Attainment and progress in RE is reported to parents in the school report at the end of the year.

Collective Worship  As required by law, collective worship takes place on a daily basis and is linked to the schools values and vision as well as the church calendar. Worship is a time for reflection, singing and prayer. We also have specific assemblies at the times of important festivals in alternative faiths. Our values are, Respect, Empathy, Hope, Trust and Wonder. See our collective worship policy for further details.

Lent and Advent Projects  We are able to develop a social and moral awareness amongst the children by exposing them to different charities and the help they give certain people and organisations. As a Church of England school, we feel this is our religious duty and every year we raise money for a charity during Lent.

Withdrawal from Religious Education  Parents may withdraw their children from all or any part of religious education. Before being able to withdraw a child from RE there must have been a meeting with the headteacher in order to

‘... An aspirational school within the heart of the community. Leading learning for all, through respect, empathy, hope, trust and wonder...’
explore the possibility of the pupil remaining in religious education and to find out from the parent why they are requesting withdrawal. It is important that parents are aware that RE is not confessional, but an academic study. However, we hope that all parents will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school.

Parents who have any questions about the content of our RE curriculum are invited to speak to the class teacher or the headteacher in order to gain further clarity on the aspects of RE taught in their child’s year.

M Parsons

Agreed January 2019

Review January 2020