

## Religious Education Policy



**Approved by:** Local Governing Committee

**Date:** November 2022

**Last reviewed:** November 2022

**Next review due by:** November 2023

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do and all we aim to achieve.

### **Our vision**

*'Shining together to be the best we can be for God and for each other.'*

*'You are the light that gives light to the world.  
A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden.  
And people don't hide a light under a bowl,  
they put the light on a lampstand.  
Then the light shines for all the people in the house.'*

*Matthew 5 vs 14-16*

'Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live life well together.' RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office Feb 2019.

### **Christian Values Statement**

Wembdon Saint George's is proud to be a Church school. We see others as being special, a gift to us from God, each of us is unique, made in the image of God. We see prayer and worship as being important, so we allow time for this and have pictures and symbols around the school which encourage us to do this well. We celebrate the major Christian festivals and seek to understand what they mean to us.

We know that it is important for the children to grow, socially and academically as well as spiritually, morally and culturally so that we meet the needs of the whole person and become the people that God intended us to be. To aid us in this process, we identified 6 Christian values which we believe lie at the heart of all we do.

The 6 Christian values we have adopted are: Trust, Compassion, Wisdom, Forgiveness, Koinonia and Service.

**TRUST** is at the very heart of faith, if you trust someone you can rely on what they do and say. People put their trust in a range of different things, for example money and possessions. However, all of these do not last for ever and can be destroyed.

Trust is so important in all of our relationships. We can trust our real friends, where we tell them things about us that make us vulnerable. We need to

decide who we can trust and why? We can find many examples of God keeping His promises to His people. Similarly, we can see Jesus trusting us to do the things that he would have us do, we can do them in His name.

**COMPASSION** is much stronger than feeling sorry or having sympathy for someone else. The root of the word means to put yourself into another person's shoes and experiencing what they feel, even when the other person is in pain or suffering in some way. This leads to a desire to act and enable things to change. Compassion can need imagination and can demand humility when sharing in the lives of others.

**WISDOM** is more than being clever or having a good general knowledge. Wisdom is that insight into the way that life works, recognising that our actions have consequences which can be either good or bad. There is an awareness of the true value of things, which are important and last for ever. This is rooted in a reverence for God who is the source of all life and all values.

The wisdom of God is very different from the wisdom of today. Letting Jesus be crucified is the greatest example of this, yet through this God draws us back together as a family.

**FORGIVENESS** is not simply saying sorry and expecting everything to remain just as it was. Forgiveness needs to be asked for, but it is also recognising the impact of what has been done and making a commitment that it will not happen again. Therefore, you need to think before you ask for this. The Bible makes it clear that God is always prepared to forgive when we repent, Jesus too took the same approach. Included in the Lord's Prayer are requests to forgive.

There are also strong links with Easter, with Jesus' life being offered as a sacrifice for our sins.

**KOINONIA** means those things that we have in common. It can also mean being part of a fellowship or community with others. In earliest times it meant being yoked together, just as oxen were. However, it is together that the strength comes from, overcoming these together. It is because of Jesus, through His death on a cross, that he allows us to become part of the Christian community, we become the brothers and sisters of God and because of this we are linked to others who are also part of this same community regardless. Each member is valued, we share in each other's joys and sorrows. As part of this family we are interdependent upon one another.

**SERVICE** is linked to the word servant. Jesus showed how important this was. He came to earth to serve others and meet their needs. Jesus turned this idea on its head. He stated that it was better to be a servant to many as this was a real sign of wealth. Jesus gave us several examples of this including washing His disciples' feet. In the parable of the Good Samaritan we go the extra mile for friend or foe. This can mean extra time and sacrifice for us. We can serve God by serving others. A life of service can make us really free.

### **Policy Statement**

Religious Education has a very high profile within the Wembdon St. George's Church School curriculum and makes a significant contribution to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all learners. Pupils will be inspired by the subject and develop a wide range of skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world. Christianity is taught as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teachings of Jesus and the Church, alongside a range of religions and worldviews. Religious Education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while creating a safe space for them to explore their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

### **Legal Requirements**

As an academy school, at Wembdon St. George's Church School we are independent of the local authority and not required to follow the national curriculum or the local RE syllabus. However our curriculum must reflect:

'that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principle religious traditions present in Great Britain.' [Education Reform Act 1988].

The school teaches religious education according to the Somerset/North Somerset/ Bath & Northeast Somerset agreed syllabus, with additional teaching on Christianity.

Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS).

## **Manging the right to withdraw**

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum. In this event, we will undertake responsibility for their supervision with regard to health and safety. Information on these arrangements are clear on our website. There will always be opportunity for parents to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum should they have concerns.

## **Aims of RE**

- 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 most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know about and understand other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, and to appreciate the diversity, continuity and change within those religions and world views.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

## **Teaching and Learning**

In line with the Church of England RE Statement of Entitlement [2019] at Wembdon St. George's Church School we aim to provide:

- A curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice.
- A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide.
- The opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.
- A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place.
- Engaging and varied learning activities that provide for the needs of all learners, supported by high quality resources.
- The opportunity for pupils to develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development and also to pupils' understanding of British values.

- An assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts.

### **Implementation**

- Religious education may be taught in a whole class setting but with flexibility to allow for discussion, questioning and reflection in small groups and individually.
- In normal times, visits to local churches and other places of worship are encouraged.
- A variety of teaching approaches are encouraged, and class teachers will record evidence of RE in a class floor book weekly:
  - Teacher presentations, role play, drama and story telling
  - Questions and answer sessions, discussions and debates
  - Individual and group research
  - Photographs, pictures and maps
  - IT, film, podcasts, radio, websites, to research and communicate ideas.

### **Curriculum balance and time**

Reflecting Wembdon St. George's Church School's academy funding agreement, Christianity should be the majority religion studied and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, should be given to RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but no less than 5% in key stages 1 and 2.

### **Resources**

Staff use the following resources to deliver Religious Education throughout the school:

- Awareness, Mystery and Value, the Diocesan Agreed RE syllabus.
- "Understanding Christianity." the recommended scheme of work from the BWMAT.
- "Discovery RE." scheme of work – used for non- Christian faiths.

The resources above are stored digitally on our SharePoint.

In addition, staff and children have access to non-fiction and fiction books within our school library.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, Assessment, Recording, Reporting**

- Governors have responsibility for monitoring how the RE in the school reflects its Christian vision



- The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation.
- The RE subject leader will assist the headteacher by monitoring long term and medium-term plans.
- The RE subject leader will assist the headteacher by monitoring RE through floor book scrutinies.
- The subject leader will keep examples of work to demonstrate continuity and progression.
- The subject leader will manage resources.
- The subject leader will endeavour to keep up to date with information, initiatives and developments in religious education and disseminate this as appropriate.
- The subject leader will be aware of staff development needs and encourage continuing professional development.
- The subject leader will facilitate the sharing of good practice.
- The subject leader will be responsible for drawing up an action plan for religious education. Generally this will be an annual plan and should be informed by this policy.
- The subject leader will liaise with the Diocesan adviser with responsibility for Religious Education.
- Pupils will be assessed at the end of every unit by their class teacher using assessment tools from both the Salisbury Diocese to evaluation units of "Understanding Christianity.", and end of unit assessments in "Discovery RE." for other non-Christian faiths.