

Building Together

Esh Church of England Primary School.

Policy

for

Religious Education

September 2025

      

 These Guidelines are adopted subject to the over-riding requirements of relevant legislation, of the school Trust Deed and to the legal responsibilities and powers of the Governing Body as employer, admissions authority and owner of the school.

Esh C.E. (Aided) Primary School

Religious Education Policy

**‘Building Together’**

Matthew 7:24-27

**The Legal Position**

Esh Church of England Primary School, as part of the Melrose Learning Trust and, in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act, provides Religious Education for all pupils registered at the school. Religious Education (RE) is part of the basic curriculum but not part of the National Curriculum because it is taught in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. Esh C.E. (Aided) Primary School follow Understanding Christianity (2016) and the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed RE syllabus (2024).

We must stress that Religious Education (RE) has the same status and importance as other core subjects and the same high standards are applied to Religious Education as to all other subjects. We teach Religious Education according to the aims of the syllabus and it is clearly stated that Religious Education should not attempt to alter a child's own beliefs but to provide a knowledge of their own and other's world views.

**Intent**

**Our School Christian Vision is ‘Building Together’, from the parable Jesus told of the wise and foolish builders. Through Religious Education we aim to provide a solid foundation from learning about the world views and beliefs of people in a respectful and accepting manner.**

At Esh Church of England Primary School, RE teaches all pupils about Christianity and other religious and non-religious world views so that our pupils gain a greater understanding of the world views and beliefs of people in our ever-changing world and begin to understand their own sense of place within it. **This reflects the fact that all children and adults in school have a world view that is unique.**

**Aims of this work**

* To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring core theological concepts
* To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians
* To develop pupils’ abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of Religious and Non-Religious World Views, of themselves, the world and human experience.

The aims and purposes of Religious Education in a Church School are drawn from the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed RE syllabus (2024).

* To ensure excellence in Religious Education
* To enable pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief
* 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 and understand about other Religious and Non-Religious World Views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
* To contribute to the development of pupils’ own theological/sociological/ spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own world views and values.

Appropriate to their age at the end of their education in Church schools, the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum pupils 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 Religious and Non-Religious World Views 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.’

Understanding Christianity and the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed RE syllabus (2024).

are designed to support schools in developing and delivering excellence in RE. They set out an approach to teaching and learning, support teachers to help pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, develop their understanding and their ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about Religious and Non-Religious World Views. They are underpinned by three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, thus supporting the aims of Religious Education.

**Early Years**

**ELG: People, Culture and Communities**

Children at the expected level of development will: -

* Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;

Nursery children are part of the Early Years Foundation Stage in Class 1. Whilst RE in Nursery is non-compulsory, the children will access some early elements of RE through enhancements in provision.

Reception children, as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, will access the following Units from Understanding Christianity.

* **God/Creation** – Why is the Word God so important to Christians?
* **Incarnation** – Why do Christians perform Nativity Plays at Christmas?
* **Salvation** – Why do Christians put a Cross in an Easter Garden?

They will follow the following Foundation Stage Units from the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Syllabus (2024) :-

* Diwali
* Which stories are special and why?
* Being Special. Where so we belong?
* Which places are special and why?

**Core Learning Values**

At Esh CE Primary we enable children to fulfil their role as responsible global citizens now and in the future by developing skills of independence, creativity and teamwork. As part of thinking independently we seek to develop each child’s ability to make informed choices, recognising that their actions contribute towards ensuring that the rights of all are respected. Our curriculum is founded upon the explicit development of these skills.

**Planning and Delivery**

Teaching and learning in the classroom will encompass all three of the elements below, allowing for overlap between elements as suits the religion, concept and question being explored.

* Making Sense of the Text/Belief
* Making Connections
* Understanding the Impact

In addition to this our Religious Education at Esh Church of England Primary School is evolving to a Multi-Disciplinary approach. Using Livvy the Social Scientist, Theo the Theologian and Sophie the Philosopher, children will ask questions from these different disciplines and analyse relevant data relating to religious and non-religious world views.

A copy of the Long-Term Plan for RE for each of the classes in school is available on the school website.

# The core concepts

The following core concepts are explored in the Understanding Christianity approach, as part of the ‘big story’ of the Bible, as understood within Christianity.

**God -** Fundamental to Christian belief is the existence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**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.  This attitude is called 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. Incarnation means that Jesus is God in the flesh, and that, in Jesus, God came to live amongst humans.

**Gospel** - Christians believe Jesus’ incarnation is ‘good news’ for all people. (‘Gospel’ means ‘good news’.)  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’ example and teaching emphasise 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. He opens the way back to God. Christians believe that 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 Bible talks in terms of God’s ‘Kingdom’ having begun in human hearts through Jesus. 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.  Christians look forward to a time when God’s rule is fulfilled at some future point, in a restored, transformed heaven and earth. Meanwhile, they seek to live this attractive life as in God’s Kingdom, following Jesus’ example, inspired and empowered by God’s Spirit.

**Skills:**

Investigation, Enquiry, Empathy, Interpretation, Evaluation, Application, Reflection, Analysis, Expression.

**Attitudes:**

Commitment, Fairness, Respect, Self-understanding, Acceptance, Perseverance, Resilience, Enquiring.

**Teaching and learning strategies:**

To ensure all children have access to the curriculum, the Religious Education syllabus is creative yet challenging. Many different resourceful strategies are used both to introduce themes and also as a way for children to explore ideas and respond to the impact this may have on their lives and on the lives of others.

These include:-

* Using passages of text from Bibles that are age appropriate.
* Surveys, case studies and other data.
* Poetry and stories
* Godly Play
* Resource boxes and artefacts
* Art work (including the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Art 2012)
* Visits to e.g. religious buildings or places of significance including places of worship from other faiths.
* Visitors e.g. local clergy or members of a faith or non-faith community.
* Music
* Drama and roleplay.
* Computing
* Design and food technology
* Discussion
* Display
* The natural and outdoor environment.
* Multi-sensory /audio, visual and kinaesthetic.

**Allocation of time**

Christianity will be taught 50% of the time with the remaining 50% for teaching of other Religious and Non-Religious World Views.

In Reception, children will learn begin exploring Islam, Judaism, Hindu Dharma and Humanism.

In KS1, Children will learn about Islam, Judaism and Humanism.
In KS2, Children will learn about Islam, Judaism, Sikhi, Hindu Dharma and Humanism.

**Resources and choice of materials.**

A variety of resources will be used when appropriate, namely:-

* Bibles
* Surveys, data and case studies.
* Core Concept cards.
* The Big Frieze
* books,
* artefacts
* clothes
* posters and prints
* music
* videos
* Godly Play resource boxes
* PowerPoints
* visitors from local faiths
* visits to places of worship

The school is building up a collection of artefacts and resources which are stored in a labelled box, as well as displayed around school. These also reflect that we are a Church of England Primary School. Other items may be borrowed from Cuthbert House, the Durham Diocese Resource library.

**Monitoring, evaluation and reviews**

It is the role of the Head Teacher and R.E. Lead in school to monitor the policy and practise of Religious Education. In addition, there is a specialist Governor responsible for R.E. who liaises with the Head Teacher and R.E. Lead before reporting to the Governors on Religious Education in school. We work closely with the Durham and Newcastle Diocese and we are also part of a Church of England Primary Schools network through the Newcastle and Durham Diocese and the Melrose Learning Trust who share ideas, evaluations, practices and procedures in our schools.

The R.E. Lead will ensure that any local or national updates will be passed on to all staff and that the resources will be well maintained. They will also provide support for all staff in the implementation of the Religious Education curriculum and assessment whilst continuing their own professional development within this subject area.

**The Role of the R.E. Leader**

The R.E. Leader is responsible for:-

* Producing and updating or revising the RE policy in line with any changes.
* The organisation and purchase of RE resources.
* Keeping up to date with developments in R.E. particularly in relation to Understanding Christianity, the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed Syllabus and Multi-Disciplinary RE.
* Advising and assisting with planning, progression, assessment, record-keeping and reporting.
* Encouraging good classroom practise and high standards throughout the school.
* Leading in-service training and staff discussions.
* Encourage participation in competitions where available.
* Keeping parents and Governors informed.
* Providing advice and support for new staff and students.
* Ensuring that the needs of R.E. are reflected in the School Improvement Plan.
* Monitoring the curriculum.

**Assessment and Record Keeping**

Esh Church of England Primary School use Age Related Expectations (ARE) in their assessments. They are based upon the assessment opportunities given in the Understanding Christianity and the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed Syllabus. Teachers have also been given extra guidance from the RE Lead which shows what children should know at the end of Y2, Y4 and Y6. This is used as a guide in the setting of tasks. It is also for teachers to ensure that children are working at a level appropriate for their age and ability and using the correct vocabulary. The levels listed are only *possible* levels of achievement and we should not underestimate children’s abilities. It is also important to stress that pupils are not assessed on personal faith but on their knowledge, skills, and understanding of this particular subject area.

As with other core subjects we place the utmost importance on achievement in RE and expect children to achieve good or outstanding progress over the year. RE assessment should seek to raise standards of achievements in R.E. through:-

* providing teachers with information of individual strengths and weaknesses
* informing the planning of future work
* recognising and rewarding achievement
* involving pupils in the assessment of their own work and setting of targets
* showing pupils what they are capable of

**Display of Work and Record Keeping**

Each child in school will have their own Religious Education Evidence book which will show the work they have completed in each unit from Understanding Christianity and the Durham and Newcastle Diocese Agreed Syllabus. In order to show which lesson link to work on Text/Belief a letter T or B will be noted on the lesson follow up. Lessons on Impact will show a letter I and lessons on Connections will show a letter C.

The RE Lead will keep other evidence in files as necessary.

**Withdrawal**

Parents have every right to withdraw their children from Religious Education. However, parents are encouraged to discuss the matter with the Head Teacher before a final decision on withdrawal is made. Parents should be left in no doubt that RE, in a Church school, as in any school, is concerned with the development of the whole person with proper respect for individual freedom.