



### **A synopsis of our RE policy at St Stephen's CfE Primary School**

The Religious Education (RE) Policy for St. Stephen's CE Primary School establishes RE as a core academic subject designed to foster religious literacy, critical thinking and mutual respect among students of all faiths and none. Aligned with the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) syllabus and the Church of England's educational vision, the curriculum dedicates two-thirds of its content to Christianity and one-third to other major world religions and non-religious worldviews. The policy mandates a minimum of one hour and 30 minutes of weekly instruction structured around an enquiry-based "Big Question" approach, tracking student progress termly from the experiential learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage through Key Stage Two. While explicitly recognising the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from RE, the policy heavily emphasises community integration, maintaining close collaborative planning links with St. Stephen's Church and actively engaging parents to support the spiritual, moral and cultural development of every child.



## Religious Education Policy

\*This policy has been written in line with the LDBS RE policy template.

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| DATE APPROVED BY ST. STEPHEN'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL | Autumn 2026                   |
| REVIEW DATE                                      | Autumn 2029                   |
| APPROVED BY                                      | Ethos and Community Committee |

### Our Mission Statement

**A centre of excellence** where everyone is included whatever their personality or how they learn. We create opportunities for every child to see themselves as unique, courageous and resilient global citizens.

**A community** where Christianity, all faiths and those of no faith are welcomed and our relationships are based on understanding each others' feelings and inclusivity.

**An environment** where everybody's needs are met and differences, gifts and talents are recognised, appreciated and respected. We celebrate the diversity of our wonderful school and encourage all pupils to be active upstanders for fairness and equity.

**A safe place** where childhood is celebrated.

**A boost** to our future, as all are built up in love and learning.

**1 Thessalonians 5:11 - *Encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing.***

## **Religious Education at St Stephen's**

“Religious Education 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 well together.

*Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.*

### **(Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)**

#### **1. Introduction**

This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils in developing a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education (RE) and is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and the school's theologically rooted vision and associated Christian values.

At St. Stephen's, the main aim of RE is to enable children to become religiously literate and hold balanced, well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews. By engaging with challenging questions of human existence, pupils develop a deep global awareness and the ability to form their own knowledge-based opinions. Throughout their school journey, children learn to respect differing viewpoints, leaving Year 6 with the confidence, kindness and understanding needed to thrive in a diverse world.

#### **2. What is RE?**

RE is a core academic subject in Church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

**Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in church schools are:**

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text

- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures, and places
- To explore their own religious, spiritual, and philosophical ways of living, believing, and thinking

### **3. Curriculum balance, planning and time allocation**

RE is a protected core subject taught weekly for at least one hour and 30 minutes, following the LDBS syllabus structured as  $\frac{2}{3}$  Christian and  $\frac{1}{3}$  other major world faiths. Class teachers must follow the fixed, sequential units allocated by the RE lead, ensuring appropriate pitch, skills integration and the use of 'Big Questions' and vocabulary word mats. Supported by termly meetings with the RE lead to secure subject knowledge, teachers are responsible for tracking attainment against the big questions and updating the LDBS assessment sheets termly.

### **4. Legal requirements**

RE must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over).

(DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28)

The law relating to RE for pupils who are not yet in Key Stage One is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As RE must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes.

The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision.

The right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship (Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2010).

Parents may withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship and not withdraw the child from the remainder of their RE.

## **5. How we teach RE:**

RE is treated as a core academic subject aligned with the school's theologically rooted vision. Lessons enable pupils to describe, explain and analyze diverse beliefs, encouraging them to debate views and ask 'big' questions about God. Learning is enriched through high-quality resources, biblical texts, artifacts and visits to places of worship. While prioritising Christianity as a Church school, the curriculum fosters broad respect by covering major world faiths (Judaism, Sikhism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism) and non-religious worldviews (Humanism, Secularism, Atheism). Each year group focuses on a specific world faith, enhanced by cross-curricular links and community or staff guest speakers.

## **6. The intent of the LDBS syllabus:**

- To enable all children to become religiously literate
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – Vision for Education (Church of England)
- To offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
  1. Ability to be critical thinkers;
  2. Ability to engage critically with texts;
  3. Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions;
  4. Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews;
  5. Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/ or philosophical convictions;
  6. Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content
- Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences
- Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- The Christian vision of the school
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement

- The Church of England's vision for Education – every person deserves to live a 'life in all its fullness.'

## 7. Implementation of the LDBS syllabus:

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

1. **Enquire:** Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, Philosophy or Human/ Social Science.
2. **Investigate/ Explore:** What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to 'deepen' learning:
  - Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
  - Using challenging and controversial questions
  - Extended pieces of writing
  - Discussion which continually asks 'Have we gone deep enough yet?'
  - Children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc)
  - Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues
3. **Evaluate/ Communicate:** What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/ practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.
4. **Reflect on/ Express:** What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

## 8. Early Years Foundation Stage:

The EYFS approach focuses on experiential and play-based learning to build foundational knowledge.

- **Small World Scenarios:** Using miniature figures and settings (like a stable for the Nativity or a boat for stories of Jesus) allows children to recreate and understand key events in a **hands-on**, imaginative way.
- **Role Play:** Children take on the personas of key people (e.g., shepherds, Mary, Joseph) or act out key events, deepening their emotional and contextual understanding of the stories.

- **Story:** This is the primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge of the **Bible's** key narratives, events, and people, laying the groundwork for religious concepts and vocabulary.

This early exposure is essential as it provides the **scaffolding** for later, more formal RE learning:

- **Knowledge Base:** Children have a starting point—familiar stories and characters—to connect new, more complex concepts to as they move into Key Stage 1.
- **Religious Vocabulary:** They begin to use and understand words like '**church,**' '**celebration,**' '**worship,**' '**Bible,**' and the names of key religious figures, which are essential for discussing faith.
- **Cultural Understanding:** Even at a young age, this introduces them to the beliefs and practices that shape the lives of many people in their community and the wider world.

## 9. Religious Education in Key Stage One:

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children:

- Have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level
- Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview
- Children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life
- They will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own
- Some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people

## 10. Religious Education in Key Stage Two:

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will:

- Be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level
- Able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary
- Have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life

We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two;

- To be able to express and justify their own views with confidence
- To be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts
- To be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit

## **11. Access to the curriculum**

We recognise, through our adaptive planning system, that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts, knowledge, and to flourish. All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

## **12. Impact of the LDBS syllabus**

The implementation of the LDBS syllabus ensures that children become religiously literate, enabling them to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews. Driven by a rich and engaging RE curriculum, pupils make good or better academic progress from their individual starting points while developing the capacity to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual, or philosophical convictions. Furthermore, this deep knowledge of diverse belief systems, values and practices empowers children to make informed personal choices and decisions concerning religion, ultimately helping them develop a profound understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness.

## **13. Environment and Resources**

RE funding supports the purchase of diverse resources, including books, posters, diocesan guidance and artifacts, which are stored accessibly and kept in good condition for both staff and pupils. Budgets also prioritise staff INSET, workshops and visits to places of worship. We organise a rich, stimulating environment that fosters deep thinking and offers adapted, equal-status tasks to ensure independent and collaborative curriculum access for all learning needs. Emphasising hands-on experiences, pupils learn to handle religious artifacts, a practice enriched by real-life resources, guest speakers and our strong collaborative relationship with the local parish and wider community.

## **14. Working closely with St Stephen's Church**

RE lessons give pupils the opportunity to understand Christianity as a living, diverse faith while reinforcing our school values and building a sense of belonging. We collaborate closely with the Parish Church of St Stephen's to support spiritual flourishing. The children's pastor and RE communicate regularly to plan support around lesson outcomes for each year group's 'Big Question', which deepens teacher subject knowledge, allows for reflection on best practices and evaluates progress through pupil voice and book looks. Additionally,

we host dedicated RE days to celebrate faith and learning, featuring church-led worship and specialised activities that help pupils engage deeply with the chosen theme.

### **15. Links with our school values**

Our school values of friendship, thankfulness, kindness, forgiveness, respect (for the environment), service and peace underpins all that we do at St Stephen's. We ensure to link our school values in our lesson outcomes where applicable to support with deepening pupils' knowledge of how to use these values in the world around us. In our lessons, we take great pride in connecting our school values with the work of Jesus so that the pupils are able to retrieve key events securely.

### **16. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in the following way:**

- Children's individual books
- Children's individual reflection diaries
- Class portfolios
- Photographs
- Records of class discussions/debates (flip charts)
- Group outcomes
- Class displays
- Teacher's evaluations of their planning
- Teacher observations

### **17. Continued professional development:**

We actively encourage subject-specific professional development for all teaching staff. Teachers seeking to strengthen their subject knowledge or planning can access support from the RE leader, who can also arrange external LDBS CPD courses. To ensure high-quality teaching, we utilise the expertise of St Stephen's Church staff and regularly invite the clergy to support classroom lessons. During termly meetings or planning days, teachers identify specific areas within the RE curriculum where they require support, enabling the school to collaborate with the Church to address development needs and enhance instructional delivery.

### **18. Parents and Carers**

A strong partnership with parents and carers is essential for children to flourish. We actively involve families in their child's RE journey through proactive communication, including concise "Year Group Snapshots" in our weekly newsletters that detail current topics, vocabulary and learning intentions to prompt discussion at home. Furthermore, class teachers invite pupils to respectfully share their own family traditions, worldviews or celebrations through photos or descriptions. This open communication and shared participation contextualise learning and deepen the vital connection between home and school.

## **19. Role of the RE subject leader**

- The RE subject leader is responsible for ensuring that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education and that provision aligns with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. To maintain high standards, the leader keeps up to date with subject developments by attending LDBS network meetings and completing training. In collaboration with the senior leadership team, they monitor and evaluate RE planning, teaching and assessment, while directly supporting staff through team planning, teaching, moderation and targeted INSET or CPD. The leader also reviews policy impact, maintains the school's ongoing SIAMS self-evaluation document and manages the RE budget and resources, ensuring materials are shared with staff and the ETHOS committee. Finally, they provide regular curriculum and training updates to the ETHOS committee and maintain a strict safeguarding and suitability protocol for classroom visitors.

## **Evaluation/Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every two years by the Governing Body.