



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



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Our Mission Statement

We are a caring, village school which promotes Christian values, where each child receives a high standard of education that is broad, challenging, exciting and encourages creative thinking. We encourage every learner to be the best they can be, to reflect and plan the next steps in their learning journey, demonstrating a respect towards others and contributing to the communities of which they are a part.

Our Vision

Our vision is to nurture unique individuals who are outstanding learners, demonstrating wisdom, responsibility and kindness within their communities. Using the Good Samaritan as our role model, we know that loving others as we would want to be loved is upmost for happy, healthy lives.

Values

Wise - we think wisely and are committed to learning. We relish and retain knowledge and value high standards. We have high expectations, high aspirations and enjoy challenge. Like the wise man who built his house upon the rocks (Matthew 7), we think creatively and use learning to make good decisions. We have firm foundations for our lives.

Responsible – we are responsible for ourselves – our well-being, our behaviour and our learning. We strive to be the best people we can be and the best person for others. We have a responsibility to others inside and out of school and at times need to be patient, tolerant and courageous in demonstrating this. As Noah had to step up when God asked him to, so must we. We are a school family whose strength is in our ability to work together. We know that perseverance and hard work will bring reward and that resilience is about coping with challenges positively.

Kind - we are kind. Through support, nurture and understanding we all flourish. Each one of us is unique – on the outside and inside. We value diversity and respect difference. There are hundreds and thousands, millions of us but God knows everyone and God knows me!

Curriculum Intent

Our curriculum is designed around our Christian values. Each term, we focus on 2 values across the school and develop a working understanding of them through our choice of texts and foundation subject learning, embedding reading and maths at the core. Our approach is to deliver knowledge rich, sequential learning which excites and inspires, provides opportunity for recap and challenge, raises questions for debate, develops learners' confidence and enables independent learning to flourish. High standards, collaboration and valuing individuals' well-being is at the heart of this process. We believe that how we teach is as important as what we teach and that enrichment experiences are an entitlement. We want our curriculum to enable our children to be wise, responsible and kind in line with our school core values.

Introduction

Religious Education (RE) is an important part of the broad and balanced curriculum at Buckland Church of England Primary School. RE is a statutory subject and forms part of the basic curriculum for pupils in state-funded schools. The statutory framework for RE is established through the Education Act 1996, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and subsequent legislation. The Education Act 2002 also requires schools to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum which promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. As a Church of England school, RE has a distinctive and significant place within our curriculum and contributes to our Christian vision and our values of being Wise, Responsible and Kind. It enables children to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religions and non-religious worldviews, while exploring significant questions about belief, meaning, purpose and value.

At Buckland, RE is taught in accordance with the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023–2028, alongside Understanding Christianity, which supports the development of a coherent and progressive understanding of Christian belief.

Our Philosophy

At Buckland Church of England Primary School, we believe that Religious Education is valuable for all children, whatever their background, beliefs or worldview. RE provides opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religions and non-religious worldviews, while encouraging them to reflect on their own ideas, experiences and understanding.

We believe that high-quality RE should encourage curiosity, questioning and thoughtful reflection. Children learn to explore beliefs and practices, consider different perspectives and develop the skills to express and justify their ideas using appropriate knowledge, evidence and reasoning.

RE makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It helps children to understand themselves and others and to appreciate the diversity of beliefs and worldviews within our local community, modern Britain and the wider world.

As a Church of England school, Christianity and spiritual development are valued and explored, while children are taught to engage knowledgeably and respectfully with people whose beliefs and worldviews may be different from their own.

Our Church School Context

As a Church of England school, our Christian vision and values are central to school life. We have close links with St Mary's Church, Buckland, where we come together for services including Harvest and Christmas, as well as for other opportunities for worship, prayer and reflection. Our relationship with the church and wider Christian community enriches children's experiences and understanding of Christianity.

RE is distinct from Collective Worship, although both contribute to the spiritual life and Christian character of the school. Further information about Collective Worship can be found in the school's Collective Worship Policy.

The Nature of Religious Education

RE combines the development of secure knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews with opportunities for children to explore significant questions about belief, meaning, purpose and value.

Children learn about religious and non-religious beliefs, practices, texts, traditions and lived experiences. They are also encouraged to ask questions, consider different perspectives, make connections and develop reasoned responses based on their learning.

Both dimensions are important in ensuring that RE at Buckland is academically rigorous, personally meaningful and relevant to children's understanding of the world around them.

RE Curriculum Intent

At Buckland Church of England Primary School, we aim to provide a knowledge-rich and progressive RE curriculum which develops children's understanding of Christianity, other religions and non-religious worldviews.

Children build their knowledge progressively as they move through the school, making connections between beliefs, practices, texts and traditions. They are encouraged to ask questions about belief, meaning, purpose and value, consider different perspectives and use their developing knowledge to express and justify their ideas.

As a Church of England school, Christianity has a central place within our RE curriculum. Through Understanding Christianity, children develop a coherent understanding of key Christian concepts and make connections between biblical texts, Christian belief and the ways in which Christians live.

Alongside Christianity, children encounter a range of religious and non-religious worldviews through the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus. This broadens their understanding of the diversity of belief and practice within our local community, modern Britain and the wider world.

RE supports our Christian vision and our core values of being Wise, Responsible and Kind. It also provides opportunities for children to explore and make connections with the Christian values explored through our termly values cycle, helping them to consider how values such as respect, courage, hope, forgiveness and responsibility can be understood and lived out. Through this, children develop the knowledge, curiosity and respect needed to understand and engage thoughtfully with the beliefs and worldviews of others.

Aims

We aim to:

- develop children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religions and non-religious worldviews
- develop an understanding of the worldwide Christian Church and the diversity of Christian belief and practice
- enable children to explore important questions about belief, meaning, purpose and value
- develop children's ability to question, reason, interpret, make connections and express informed views

- provide opportunities for children to encounter and consider different religious and non-religious perspectives
- help children understand how religion and worldviews influence people's lives, communities and societies
- encourage children to reflect on their own ideas and experiences while showing respect for the beliefs and views of others
- contribute to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- develop the knowledge, understanding and curiosity children need to engage thoughtfully with the diverse world in which they live

Curriculum

At Buckland Church of England Primary School, RE is taught through a two-year rolling programme, reflecting our mixed-age class structure. Our long-term planning ensures appropriate coverage and progression from EYFS to Year 6. Our curriculum follows the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023–2028, alongside Understanding Christianity.

Christianity forms a significant part of our RE curriculum, reflecting our status as a Church of England school, while children also develop knowledge and understanding of other religions and non-religious worldviews.

Understanding Christianity is used alongside the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus to support the teaching of Christianity. Selected Understanding Christianity units are taught across the school, enabling children to develop their understanding of key Christian concepts and to make connections between biblical texts, Christian beliefs and the ways in which Christians live. Across the two-year programme, children revisit and deepen their understanding through progressively more challenging questions and concepts.

Alongside Christianity, children encounter other religions and worldviews through units drawn from the Oxfordshire/Oxford Diocese curriculum materials. These are planned across the two-year cycle so that children develop their knowledge of different beliefs, practices, texts and lived experiences and learn to recognise diversity within and between religions and worldviews.

RE is taught as a distinct subject, while meaningful cross-curricular links are made where appropriate, including with English, History, Geography, Art and PSHE, where these connections enrich and deepen children's understanding.

Teaching and Learning

RE may be taught as a weekly lesson or, where appropriate, through blocked units of learning. Teaching enables children to explore religion and worldviews through the complementary disciplines of theology, philosophy and human/social sciences. Children explore what people believe and the sources of those beliefs; consider questions of meaning, truth and value; and examine how beliefs and worldviews are lived and expressed by individuals and communities. Teaching provides opportunities for children to explore religious and non-religious worldviews through a range of approaches, including discussion, questioning, reflection, stories and sacred texts, artefacts, images, music and creative activities. Godly Play is used

where appropriate to provide opportunities for children to explore biblical stories through storytelling, wondering and reflection. Children are encouraged to ask and respond to questions, consider different perspectives and use what they have learned to explain and justify their ideas. Where appropriate, learning is enriched through visitors, visits and first-hand experiences, including our links with St Mary's Church. Open the Book, values-based Collective Worship and our annual prayer days provide further opportunities for children to encounter Christian stories, traditions, prayer and reflection and enrich their experience of the Christian life of the school. Collective Worship is distinct from curriculum RE and does not replace the planned teaching of RE. Teaching is adapted to ensure that all children can access and engage with RE, while maintaining high expectations for their learning.

Resources

A range of resources are used to support the teaching of RE, including Bibles and other sacred texts, books, artefacts, images, music, digital resources and materials linked to Understanding Christianity and the Oxford Diocese curriculum. Resources are selected carefully to support accurate and respectful teaching of different religions and worldviews and are supplemented, where appropriate, by visitors, visits and first-hand experiences.

Inclusion

RE is taught to all children, and teaching is adapted to ensure that every pupil can access and engage with the curriculum. Appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with SEND, while maintaining high expectations for their learning. A range of approaches, resources and opportunities for discussion, reflection and practical learning are used to enable children to demonstrate their understanding in different ways. The beliefs, backgrounds and experiences of all pupils are treated with respect and sensitivity, and no child is expected to adopt or express a particular religious belief.

Equal Opportunities

RE is taught in a way that promotes equality, respect and understanding. All pupils are given equal opportunities to participate fully in RE, regardless of their background, faith, belief or worldview. Teaching reflects the diversity of religions and worldviews and avoids stereotypes or assumptions about individuals or communities. Children are encouraged to listen to and consider different perspectives respectfully and to recognise that there can be diversity of belief and practice within, as well as between, religions and worldviews.

Assessment and Recording

Assessment in RE is ongoing and forms part of teaching and learning. Teachers assess children's understanding through their responses in lessons, discussion, questioning and the work they produce. Feedback is given at the point of learning wherever possible so that misconceptions can be addressed and children can deepen their understanding. Assessment considers both children's developing knowledge of religions and worldviews and their ability to make connections, consider different perspectives and communicate reasoned ideas. Teachers use assessment to inform

future teaching and to ensure that children build on their prior learning and make progress through the RE curriculum.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education. Parents who wish to exercise this right are asked to contact the Headteacher so that appropriate arrangements can be made. The school will respect a parent's decision and will make suitable arrangements for the supervision of any child who is withdrawn from RE. Parents are not required to provide a reason for their decision.

Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the implementation and impact of RE across the school. Monitoring may include classroom visits, scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and staff and review of curriculum planning and assessment information. This is used to evaluate the quality and consistency of provision, identify strengths and areas for development and ensure that children are building their knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. The policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review cycle.