



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School
Finding the light in ourselves and each other
Inspired by the Gospel according to John (chapter 8, verse 12)

An aspirational school that encourages every child regardless of their background to 'soar on wings like eagles' in their learning and personal development (Isaiah 40:31)

Religious Education Policy

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*A truly inclusive school that is built upon the values of
Hope - Joy - Love - Forgiveness - Faith - Goodness*



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Background to Religious Education at St. John's

St. John's is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School (St. John's). Our school vision is Finding the light in ourselves and each other (based on the Gospel according to John), and we want our children to find their light; educationally, physically, spiritually and emotionally. Our school is distinctive in character as a Church of England Primary School and our approach to work in RE, Collective Worship and across the curriculum emphasises Christian Values and promotes good personal development.

Our hope is for all our children to have the confidence to use their talents and skills, to make responsible decisions as they learn, grow, and contribute positively to the wider world. The children are encouraged to recognise feelings and emotions in themselves and others, taught through the 'Zones of Regulation.' We enhance dignity through our curriculum and policies, which are both underpinned by our school values. These teach Christian values and core life skills to help the children become the best that they can be, demonstrating resilience, care for others and honesty. We build wisdom in our pupils by encouraging them to be curious learners, constantly questioning and striving to answer questions, so they develop into lifelong learners.

Our Golden Rules are: Do be safe, Do be responsible and Do aim High. Religious Education (RE) occupies a special place in this school's curriculum. As this is a Voluntary Aided School the RE curriculum is required by law to be determined by the Governors. We believe that a church school should positively set standards of behaviour and morality which are informed by Christ's teachings and do not merely accept or reflect current moral and social standards. RE involves both specific areas of learning and the creation of an overall ethos for the school.

Purpose of Study and Aims

Religious Education underpins all aspects of school life. Our nurturing ethos and the priority we put on developing the whole child; educationally, physically, spiritually and emotionally, is highlighted in the RE curriculum. RE provides thought-provoking questions about the meaning of life, what it means to be human and the human experience. Pupils are encouraged to think about and reflect on, issues of truth, belief and faith and be able to share what they understand. We are proud of our church school tradition and our close association with the Digswell Parish, and we enjoy preparing for and taking part in services each year at the churches in our Parish. The Reverend Canon Dr Rob Marshall or Reverend Selina Evans take regular acts of collective worship and support the school.

Our scheme of work is progressive and focuses on inquiry-led learning, featuring challenging questions. It aims to provide high quality RE for all pupils,

- 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 religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves, the world and human experience.
- to understand the Bible tells a 'big story' of salvation
- to make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs. They can then: identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using



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appropriate vocabulary, explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities, recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation

- to understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways, recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world, appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning
- to make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can: evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses, challenge the ideas they study, and consider how these ideas might challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response, discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding
- to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- to promote British Values and handling diversity and controversy specifically through developing pupils' skills in interpreting texts
- to develop pupils' values, character and virtues.
- to develop a sense of individual spirituality, through answering 'Big Questions' related to different areas studied in the curriculum and through collective worship and class discussions about life choices

Objectives

We follow the objectives in Understanding Christianity and Identities, Meanings and Values which is the agreed RE syllabus for Bedfordshire and Luton. For further details, see Appendix 1.

Experiences

It is important to give children a range of experiences which will help their religious understanding.

- According to the age of the children, these may include:
- visits to and/or studies of places of worship
- meeting with other Christians or Church leaders to hear about their faith
- reading the Bible and other Christian writings
- the presentation of Biblical stories and other religious stories in a variety of ways
- participation in celebrations relating to major Christian festivals both in church and in school
- learning about the practices and beliefs of other faiths
- looking at life from the perspective of others
- visits from members of other major world religions
- cross curricular links where appropriate
- a wide range of learning opportunities.



Knowledge

Children will acquire religious knowledge and wisdom (understanding, skills and attitudes) mainly through specific teaching based on the scheme of work. When appropriate opportunities arise RE may be taught through other curriculum links and other 'special events'.

The event may be Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish or Buddhist, but the aim is always to facilitate spiritual growth and to ensure our children learn about, understand and respect other religious beliefs and practices.

List of resources

We have a wide range of lively and stimulating resources within classrooms. They include:

- Books
- Articles
- Artefacts
- World Religion boxes
- Posters
- Song Books
- Bibles

These are regularly reviewed and audited by the RE Subject Leader who monitors the spending of the annual budget.

Withdrawal

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the teaching of RE (Education Reform Act 1988). Any parent who wishes this may consult the headteacher.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Teachers use formative assessment strategies, based on the learning outcomes for units of work to monitor progress. Lessons provide time for pupils to reflect on their learning and teacher marking follows the school marking procedures. Attainment for each pupil is collected termly and reported annually to parents. Tracking standards for all pupils in RE is completed by teachers in every unit and shared with staff and governors through the school assessment file.



Planning

We use a combination of teaching RE through subject specific lessons, and 'experience' days. Our long-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term and our curriculum overview and individual lesson plans detail the unit and weekly objectives being planned and taught by the class teacher. The Subject Leader reviews these plans on a regular basis. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of all pupils.

Leadership and Management

The Subject Leader manages this area of the curriculum. There are regular RE staff meetings focussing on developing staff expertise and where areas for development are discussed. The headteacher, Senior Leadership team and the School Governor for RE (usually a member of the clergy) work closely with the Subject Leader to monitor the teaching of Religious Education at St. John's Digswell Primary School. This policy is reviewed to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school.



Appendix 1

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

By the end of the EYFS pupils should:

- learn about Christianity by exploring key questions God, why is the word 'God' so important to Christians.
- The relationship between the Christmas play and the incarnation, why do Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas? Salvation, why do Christians put a cross in an Easter Garden?
- begin to understand some of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity including: Creation, the word God is a name., Christians believe God is the creator of the universe and Christians believe God made our wonderful world and so we should look after it. This is also part of the Judeo-Christian faith.
- Incarnation, Christians believe God came to Earth in human form as Jesus and Christians believe Jesus came to show that all people are precious and special to God.
- Salvation, Christians remember Jesus' last week (Holy Week), Jesus' name means 'He saves.' Christians believe Jesus came to show God's love and Christians try to show love to others
- learn and compare religions and beliefs/faiths by exploring key questions, Which stories are specially valued and why? (Christianity and Judaism) Which places are specially valued and why? (Christianity and Judaism) Being Special: where do we belong? (Christianity and Islam)
- Explore the meaning of the school vision to 'Finding the light in ourselves and each other' (based on the Gospel according to John) and the school values of love, hope, joy, faith, forgiveness and Goodness. .
- To explore their own spirituality by discussing Big Questions.



Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One pupils should:

- learn about Christianity by exploring key questions
- Creation, who made the world? (Year 2)
- God, what do Christians believe God is like? (Year 1)
- Incarnation, why does Christmas matter to Christians? (Year 1 and year 2) Gospel, what is the good news that Jesus brings? (Year 1 and year 2) Salvation why does Easter matter to Christians? (Year 1 and year 2)
- begin to understand some of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity and recognise that God, Creation, Incarnation and Salvation are part of a 'big story' of the Bible, also:
- God, Christians believe in God, and they find out about God in the Bible. Christians believe God is loving, kind, fair, and also Lord and King; and there are some stories that show this. Christians worship God and try to live in ways that please him.
- Creation, God created the universe. The Earth and everything in it are important to God. God has a unique relationship with human beings as their Creator and Sustainer. Humans should care for the world because it belongs to God Incarnation, Christians believe that Jesus is God and that he was born of Mary as a baby in Bethlehem. The Bible points out that his birth showed he was unique (e.g. he is worshipped as a king, in Matthew) and that he came to bring good news (e.g. to the poor, in Luke). Christians celebrate Jesus' birth; Advent for Christians is a time for getting ready for Jesus' coming.
- Gospel, Christians believe Jesus brings good news for all people. For Christians, this good news includes being loved by God and being forgiven for bad things. Christians believe Jesus is a friend to the poor and friendless. Christians believe Jesus' teachings make people think hard about how to live and show them the right way Salvation, Easter is important in the 'big story' of the Bible. Jesus showed that he was willing to forgive all people, even for putting him on the cross. Christians believe Jesus builds a bridge between God and humans. Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead, giving people hope of a new life
- learn and compare religions and beliefs/faiths by exploring key questions,
- Who is Muslim? What do they believe and how do they live? (Year 1) Who is Jewish? What do they believe and how do they live? (Year 2)
- to become increasingly aware of religious ideas, experiences and forms of festival and worship especially those which emphasise the Christian tradition
- to have an enquiring, reflective and respectful attitude towards the natural world

Making sense of beliefs

- identify some core beliefs and concepts studied in Christianity, Islam and Judaism and give a simple description of what they mean,
- give examples of how stories show what people believe (e.g. the meaning behind a festival)
- give clear, simple accounts of what stories and other texts mean to believers



Understanding the Impact

- give examples of how people use stories, texts and teachings to guide their beliefs and actions
- give examples of ways in which believers put their beliefs into practice

Making Connections

- think, talk and ask questions about whether the ideas they have been studying have something to say to them
- give a good reason for the views they have and the connections they make
- Further explore the meaning of the school vision of 'Finding the light in ourselves and each other' and the school values of love, hope, joy, faith, forgiveness and goodness.
- To explore their own spirituality by discussing Big Questions.



Key Stage Two

By the end of Lower Key Stage Two (year 3 and 4) pupils should be able:

- learn about Christianity by exploring key questions
- Creation/Fall, what do Christians learn from the Creation story? (Year 3) People of God, what is it like to follow God? (Year 3 and year 4)
- Salvation, why do Christians call the day Jesus died Good Friday? (Year 3 and year 4)
- Gospel, what kind of world did God want through Jesus ? (Year 3)
- What is the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) ?(Year 4)
- Kingdom of God, when Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost? (Year 4)
- make progress in understanding some of the main beliefs and practices of
- Christianity, beginning to see that most Christians see this wider 'big story' of the Bible.
 - Creation and Fall, God the Creator cares for the creation, including human beings. As human beings are part of God's good creation, they do best when they listen to God. The Bible tells a story (in Genesis 3) about how humans spoiled their friendship with God (sometimes called 'the Fall'). This means that humans cannot get close to God without God's help. The Bible shows that God wants to help people to be close to him – he keeps his relationship with them, gives them guidelines on good ways to live (such as the Ten Commandments), and offers forgiveness even when they keep on falling short. Christians show that they want to be close to God too, through obedience and worship, which includes saying sorry for falling short.
 - People of God, the Hebrew Scriptures tells the story of a particular group of people, the children of Israel – the People of God – and their relationship with God. The People of God try to live in the way God wants, following his commands and worshipping him. They believe he promises to stay with them, and Bible stories show how God keeps his promises. The Hebrew Scriptures narrative explains that the People of God are meant to show the benefits of having a relationship with God, and to attract all other nations to worshipping God. Christians believe that, through Jesus, all people can become the People of God.
 - God and Incarnation, Christians believe Jesus is one of the three persons of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Christians believe the Father creates; he sends the Son who saves his people; the Son sends the Holy Spirit to his followers. Christians worship God as Trinity. It is a huge idea to grasp, and artists have created art to help to express this belief. Christians believe the Holy Spirit is God's power at work in the world and in their lives today, enabling them to follow Jesus.
 - Gospel, Christians believe Jesus challenges everyone about how to live – he sets the example for loving God and your neighbour, putting others first. Christians believe Jesus challenges people who pretend to be good (hypocrisy) and shows love and forgiveness to unlikely people. Christians believe Jesus' life shows what it means to love God (his Father) and love your neighbour. Christians try to be like Jesus – they want to know him better and better. Christians try to put his teaching and example into practice in lots of ways, from church worship to social justice
 - Salvation, Christians see Holy Week as the culmination of Jesus' earthly life, leading to his death and resurrection. The various events of Holy Week, such as the Last Supper, were important in showing the disciples what Jesus came to earth to do. Christians today trust that Jesus really did rise from the dead, and so is still alive today. Christians remember and celebrate Jesus' last week, death and resurrection. Kingdom of God, Christians believe that Jesus inaugurated the 'Kingdom of God' –



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i.e. Jesus' whole life was a demonstration of his belief that God is king, not just in heaven but here and now ('Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'). Christians believe Jesus is still alive, and rules in their hearts and lives through the Holy Spirit, if they let him. Christians believe that after Jesus returned to be with God the Father, he sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost to help the Church to make Jesus' invisible kingdom visible by living lives that reflect the love of God. Christians celebrate Pentecost as the beginning of the Church. Staying connected to Jesus means that the fruit of the Spirit can grow in the lives of Christians.

- learn and compare religions and beliefs/faiths by exploring key questions, Sikhism, how is faith expressed in Sikh communities and traditions? (Year 3) Islam, how do festivals and worship show what matters to a Muslim? (Year 3)
- What are the deeper meanings of religious festivals? (Year 3)
- Hinduism, how is faith expressed in Hindu community and traditions? (Year 4)
- What helps Hindu people as they try to be good? (Year 4)
- Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, non-religious people, how and why do people try to make the world a better place? (Year 4)

Making sense of beliefs

- make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs by learning about Christianity, Sikhism and Islam (year 3) and Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and non-religious viewpoints (year 4).
- identify and describe the core beliefs and concepts studied
- make clear links between texts/sources of authority and the key concepts studied
- offer suggestions about what texts/sources of authority can mean and give examples of what these sources mean to believers

Understanding the Impact

- understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs
- make simple links between stories, teachings and concepts studied and how people live, individually and in communities
- describe how people show their beliefs in how they worship and in the way they live
- identify some differences in how people put their beliefs into action

Making Connections

- make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied
- raise important questions and suggest answers about how far the beliefs and practices studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live
- make links between some of the beliefs and practices studied and life in the world today, expressing some ideas of their own clearly
- give good reasons for the views they have and the connections they make
- To explore their own spirituality by discussing Big Questions.

By the end of Upper Key Stage Two (year 5 and 6) pupils should be able to:



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- learn about Christianity by exploring key questions
- God, what does it mean if God is holy and loving? (Year 5) Gospel, what would Jesus do? (Year 5)
- Salvation, what did Jesus do to save human beings? (Year 5) Kingdom of God, what kind of King is Jesus? (Year 5)
- Creation/Fall, creation and Science: Conflicting or complementary? (Year 6) Incarnation, Was Jesus the Messiah? (Year 6)
- Salvation, what difference does the resurrection make to Christians? (Year 6) People of God, how can following God bring freedom and justice? (Year 6)
- Make progress in understanding some of the main beliefs and practices of Christianity as they arise from studying the above concepts and begin to grasp the 'big story' and recognise its significance for ways in which many Christians understand the Bible and its importance in exploring God's dealings with humanity. God, Christians believe God is omnipotent, omniscient and eternal, and that this means God is worth worshipping. Christians believe God is both holy and loving, and Christians have to balance ideas of God being angered by sin and injustice (see Fall) but also being loving, forgiving, and full of grace. Christians believe God loves people so much that Jesus was born, lived, was crucified and rose again to show God's love.
 - Christians do not all agree about the nature of God, but try to follow his path, as they see it in the Bible or through Church teaching. Christians believe getting to know God is like getting to know a person rather than learning information.
 - Creation and Fall, there is much debate and some controversy around the relationship between the accounts of creation in Genesis and contemporary scientific accounts. These debates and controversies relate to the purpose and interpretation of the texts: for example, does reading Genesis as a poetic account conflict with scientific accounts? There are many scientists through history and now who are Christians. The discoveries of science make Christians wonder even more about the power and majesty of the Creator.
 - People of God, the Hebrew Scriptures piece together the story of the People of God. As their circumstances change (for example, from being nomads (Abraham, Jacob) to being city dwellers (David)), they have to learn new ways of following God. The story of Moses and the Exodus shows how God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt; Christians see this story as looking forward to how Jesus' death and resurrection also rescue people from slavery to sin. Christians apply this idea to living today by trying to serve God and to bring freedom to others, for example by loving others, caring for them, bringing health, food, justice, and telling the story of Jesus. Christians see the Christian Church as part of the ongoing story of the People of God and try to live in a way that attracts others to God, for example as salt and light in the world. Incarnation, Jesus was Jewish. Christians believe Jesus is God in the flesh. They believe that his birth, life, death and resurrection were part of a longer plan by God to restore the relationship between humans and God. The Old Testament talks about a 'rescuer' or 'anointed one' — a messiah. Some texts talk about what this 'messiah' would be like. Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled these expectations, and that he is the Messiah. (Jewish people do not think Jesus is the Messiah.) Christians see Jesus as their Saviour (see Salvation).
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 - Gospel, Christians believe the good news is not just about setting an example for good behaviour and challenging bad behaviour: it is that Jesus offers a way to heal the damage done by human sin. Christians see that Jesus' teachings and example cut across expectations — the Sermon on the Mount is an example of this, where Jesus' values favour serving the weak and vulnerable, not making people



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comfortable. Christians believe that Jesus' good news transforms lives now, but also points towards a restored, transformed life in the future (see Salvation and Kingdom of God). Christians believe that they should bring this good news to life in the world in different ways, within their church family, in their personal lives, with family, with their neighbours, in the local, national and global community

- Salvation, Christians read the 'big story' of the Bible as pointing out the need for God to save people. This salvation includes the ongoing restoration of humans' relationship with God. The Gospels give accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection. The New Testament says that Jesus' death was somehow 'for us.' Christians interpret this in a variety of ways: for example, as a sacrifice for sin; as a victory over sin, death and the Devil; paying the punishment as a substitute for everyone's sins; rescuing the lost and leading them to God; leading from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom. Christians remember Jesus' sacrifice through the service of Holy Communion (also called the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist or the Mass). Belief in Jesus' resurrection confirms to Christians that Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, but also that death is not the end. This belief gives Christians hope for life with God, starting now and continuing in a new life (Heaven). Christians believe that Jesus calls them to sacrifice their own needs to the needs of others, and some are prepared to die for others and for their faith.
- Kingdom of God, Jesus told many parables about the Kingdom of God. These suggest that God's rule has begun, through the life, teaching and example of Jesus, and subsequently through the lives of Christians who live in obedience to God. The parables suggest that there will be a future Kingdom, where God's reign will be complete. The Kingdom is compared to a feast where all are invited to join in. Not everyone chooses to do so. Many Christians try to extend the Kingdom of God by challenging unjust social structures in their locality and in the world.
- learn and compare religions and beliefs/faiths by exploring key questions,
- Buddhism, what is the deeper meaning of religious festivals? (Year 5)
- Hindus, Sikhs, Jewish people, Muslims, how and why do some people inspire others? (Year 5)
- Humanists and Christians, what matters most to Humanists and Christians? (Year 6)
- Judaism, how do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people? What are the deeper meanings of religious festivals? How far does faith enable resilience? (Year 6)

Making sense of beliefs

- identify and explain the core beliefs and concepts studied, using examples from sources of authority in religions
- describe examples of ways in which people use texts/sources of authority to make sense of core beliefs and concepts
- give meanings for texts/sources of authority studied, comparing these ideas with ways in which believers interpret texts/sources of authority



Understanding the Impact

- make clear connections between what people believe and how they live, individually and in communities
- using evidence and examples, show how and why people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, e.g. in different communities, denominations or cultures

Making Connections

- Make connections between the beliefs and practices studied, evaluating and explaining their importance to different people (e.g. believers and atheists)
- reflect on and articulate lessons people might gain from the beliefs/practices studied, including their own responses, recognising that others may think differently
- consider and weigh up how ideas studied relate to their own experiences and experiences of the world today, developing insights of their own and giving good reasons for the views they have and the connections they make
- To explore their own spirituality by discussing Big Questions.



Religious Education Policy Document Control

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