



'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16

Swainswick Church of England Primary School



Religious Education policy

Last Updated October 2022

In our school, our Christian vision shapes all we do. Our vision for Swainswick is a school where all children are known and valued as unique individuals, where differences are respected and celebrated.

With community and childhood at the heart, our school intentionally nurtures kindness towards one another and believes that children thrive only when their wellbeing is held at the core of their journey.

We believe in our children, and through imagination, high expectations and challenge, we inspire them to reach their fullest potential, and develop an intrinsic happiness in who they are.

"The world is big, and we are small, but we can do anything, anything at all!"

Hazel Class child, age 7

We pride ourselves on our Christian distinctiveness; this strong ethos permeates school life and the emphasis on increasing our children's awareness of our 'values' is a significant factor in enhancing the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

As our most recent church inspections says:

- Behaviour and relationships are outstanding
- The caring family ethos is a strength of the school
- There are excellent opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development
- A strong Christian foundation underpins school life and learning
- There is a mutually beneficial and energising relationship with the local church community.

"A caring Family Where We Grow Together"

Let your Light Shine - Matthew 5 v 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



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Policy Statement

Religious Education (RE) has a very high profile within the Swainswick Church School curriculum and makes a significant contribution to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. Through collective worship, class assemblies, Religious Education (RE) and church services, we teach our school values and support the beliefs and practices of the church. We teach RE every week and in the teaching of RE, we aim for children to deepen their understanding about who they are and the part they play within our school, community and the world around them, and develop their respect, love and care for each other. 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.

We are an inclusive school, with a big community that help us to teach and believe tolerance, respect, celebrating differences and welcoming all. We give our children opportunities to discuss topics, reflect on the impact religion has on others in their community, the wider world and themselves.

We use our strong links with St Mary's Church and All Saints Church to support our children's religious education, build our community ties through Café Swainswick and celebrate Christian festivals with special services.

Legal Requirements

As an academy, 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 agreed syllabus 'Awareness, Mystery and Value' Value' to support our children to explore Christianity and other religions such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Humanism. The school also uses 'Understanding Christianity' as a resource to support children's understanding of Christianity and the Bible. The big Freize is used to depict the stories from The Bible and we map out our learning in RE alongside it.

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)



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Managing 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. There will always be an 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.

Additionally, as a school, our aims are:

- **Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills:** enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.
 - **Educating for hope and aspiration:** enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely when things go wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.
 - **Educating for community and living well together:** a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.
- Educating for dignity and respect:** the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.

Teaching and Learning

In line with the Church of England RE Statement of Entitlement [2019] at Swainswick Church School, we aim to provide:



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- 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

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
- Visits to local churches and other places of worship are encouraged
- A variety of teaching approaches are encouraged:
- 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 Swainswick 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.



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Resources

We use a range of resources to support learning and understanding:

- The Understanding Christianity syllabus
- Awareness, Mysteries and Values
- Bible stories
- Roots and Fruits
- Online resources
- Reverend David Parr
- Reverend Robert
- Guest Speakers
- Walk through the Bible
- Reflective corners
- Artefacts box

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 work scrutinies
- The subject leader will keep a file of 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.



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