Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust (DNDLT)

Company Number 10847279

"Every child matters and no child is ever left behind..."

**"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." *Luke 18:15-17***

St. Aidan's CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy
2026 - 2027

'I have come in order that you might have life:life in all its fullness'
John 10:10

Adopted by Academy Council: Autumn Term 2026

Review Date: Autumn Term 2027

Vision Statement

At St Aidan's we aim to create a happy, caring environment where we can all learn, feel safe and valued, and shine like lights in the world as children of God.

Christian Vision

Rooted in *John 10:10*

'I have come in order that you might have life: life in all its fullness'

Our school seeks to provide a rich and inclusive education where every child is enabled to flourish. We believe that all children are created by God and the theological underpinning

Matthew 5:16

'In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven'

And the words 'Let your light shine' encapsulates the school's commitment to provide an enriching education which will equip our pupils for life in all its fullness through our Christian values.

Background to Religious Education at St. Aidan's

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As a Church of England Voluntary Aided School, the teaching of Religious Education is governed by the Trust Deed drawn up when the school was founded. This is currently interpreted in a way that gives status to Christianity but also promotes respect, understanding and tolerance of other principal religions. We do this by following the Durham/Newcastle agreed syllabus for the teaching of Religious Education and supplement this with material from the Diocese and Understanding Christianity.

As a Church School, we have a duty and responsibility, therefore, to educate children in the understanding of the Christian faith and its values. Part of our Christian commitment is that we also promote a respect for, and an understanding of, the major religions represented in the school. This is developed through our daily acts of worship, direct teaching in the classroom and the daily pattern of school life. We enjoy regular contacts with the Christian community, its clergy and churches, and have links with other places of worship.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian. There are a proportion of children from practising Christian families; in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds.

RE is concerned with "learning about religion" and "learning from religion" and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of RE:

• 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 living, believing and thinking.

(Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement 2019)

Our RE Curriculum

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Diocesan Boards of Education for Durham and Newcastle strongly recommend a minimum allocation of curriculum time for RE based upon the law and the Statement of Entitlement 2019: Schools should aim to be close to 10% of curriculum for teaching RE, but must be no less than 5%. In practice, this means a starting point of 60 minutes per week for Key Stage 1 and 75 minutes per week for Key Stage 2.

RE can be delivered in flexible ways and need not be confined to a lesson per week. Further opportunities could come through RE days, RE weeks, visits and other projects.

Given the difficulty of allocating time to particular subjects, any percentage might be assessed on a yearly basis, rather than term by term. At least 50% of teaching time is devoted to Christianity with the remaining 50% devoted to other worldviews.

Using Understanding Christianity to supplement this syllabus allows for a broad, sequential and challenging RE offer. This syllabus is designed to develop and deliver excellence in RE and sets out an approach to teaching and learning, to help pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs. The syllabus is 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 RE.

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.

The Religious Education curriculum maintains a balanced approach of Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion.

This can be expressed distinctively as:

Learning about Religion

We learn about:

• God who reveals the truth about himself and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, his action in history and through the prophets;

• God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us;

• God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason.

Learning from Religion

We learn from:

• An empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it;

• Responding personally to the stories and teachings of Jesus Christ;

• Examples of Christian living which give priority to the values of unconditional love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion and faith.

Our teaching is based on three core elements:

Making sense of beliefs

Identifying and making sense of core religious and non-religious concepts and beliefs; understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions; recognising how and why sources of authority are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, and developing skills of interpretation.

Making connections

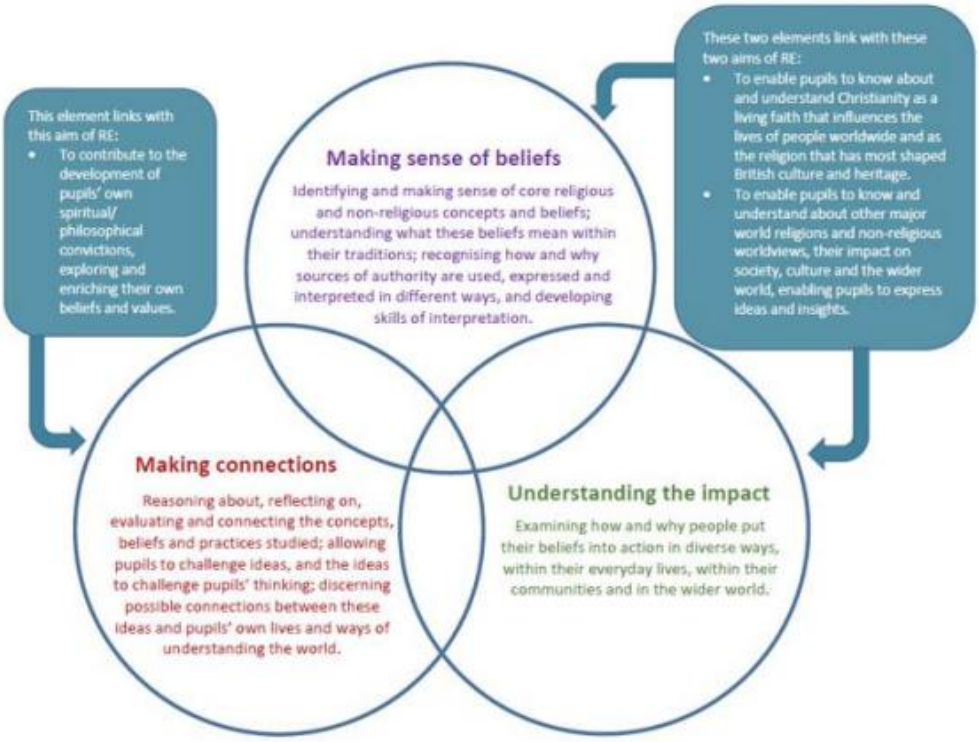
Reasoning about, reflecting on, evaluating and connecting the concepts, beliefs and practices studied; allowing pupils to challenge ideas, and the ideas to challenge pupils' thinking; discerning possible connections between these ideas and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

Understanding the impact

Examining how and why people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, within their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.

This teaching and learning model has been developed to incorporate the teaching approach taken in Understanding Christianity: Text, Impact, Connections (RE Today, 2016). This enables us to meet the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement 2019, which states that:

'…In a Church school the pupils and their families can expect an RE curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, this should include the ways in which it is unique and diverse. Parents can expect the use of high-quality resources, for example, the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils can expect that teaching and learning in Church schools will use an approach that engages with biblical text and theological ideas.'



Disciplines

We also focus our curriculum on the following disciplines

Discipline	Focus
Theology	Christian beliefs, Scripture, and theological concepts
Philosophy	Exploring ethics, meaning, and reasoning
Human/Social Sciences	Understanding faith as lived experience across different communities

We use schemes such as *Understanding Christianity* to support conceptual depth and engagement.

Teaching & Learning

The content and nature of Religious Education lends itself to an active approach which is multisensory. Pupils are given the opportunity to actively engage in the following ways:

Direct Experience

• Visits – places of worship and religious interest

• Visitors – invitations to members of a faith community or denomination to talk

• Events – media coverage of religious events showing the local, national and worldwide

• impact of religion

• Artefacts – aspects of living religion brought into the classroom for pupils to observe and consider

Expression

• Music, dance, drama and role play

• Making – festival foods, cards, artefacts, displays, models

• Discussion – reporting interviews, giving views, responses, debates

• Writing – creative writing, reports, prayers, poetry, projects, posters

• Silence and reflection – periods of stillness, quiet, listening to others, describing feelings/emotions, observing nature

• Information technology – research, presentation of work

Symbolism

• Literature – story, myths, legends, sagas, sacred writings, psalms, hymns, prayers, vows, creeds

• The arts – expression of religious beliefs, feelings, emotions in religious paintings, icons, music

• Religious symbols – graphics, badges, flags, colours, gestures.

Children will be encouraged to develop the following skills:

Investigation:

• Asking relevant questions

• Knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information

• Knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religion

• The ability to ascertain facts

Interpretation:

• The ability to draw meaning from artefacts, art, poetry and symbolism

• The ability to interpret religious language

• The ability to suggest meanings of religious texts

Evaluation and Analysis:

• The ability to debate issues of religious significance, with reference to evidence, factual information and argument

• Exercising critical and appreciative judgement in order to distinguish between belief, prejudice, superstition, opinion and fact

• Distinguishing between the features of different religions

Application of Knowledge and Skills:

• Making the association between religions and individual, community, national and
• international life

• Identifying key religious values and their interplay with secular ones

Reflection:

• The ability to think reflectively about feelings, relationships, experience, ultimate questions,

• beliefs and practices

Empathy:

• Consideration of the thoughts, feelings, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and values of others

• Developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow

• The ability to see the world through the eyes of others and to see issues from their point of view

Assessment

Teacher assessment is used to gather information during and after each unit. This can include:

• Observations of children engaged in activities

• Pupil self/peer assessment

• Dialogue with children/staff

• Written evidence

• Key objective assessment grids

A judgement will then be made as to whether a child is working at Emerging, Expected or Exceeding within each theme.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is undertaken on a termly basis.

Monitoring and evaluation includes:

• Work scrutiny - collection of pupil books and other evidence to ensure curriculum coverage and high standards are maintained

• Learning walks, including governors, focussing on developments linked to the School Improvement Plan.

• Pupil voice - garnering pupils' opinions on the learning opportunities and their first-hand experience

Roles & Responsibilities

- RE Subject Leader oversees curriculum and staff development.
- Headteacher and Governors promote the high profile of RE across the school.
- All staff model respectful attitudes and support pupils' spiritual formation.

Equal Opportunities

R.E. is provided for all children at St. Aidan's CE Primary School and makes a valuable contribution to their education. Teachers plan work which takes into account the differences in the abilities of their pupils in order to maximise their potential and extend their abilities and to allow all children access to the R.E. curriculum.

R.E. has a large part to play in helping to remove prejudice and misunderstanding and in combating stereotyping, discrimination, sexism and racism.

All pupils, irrespective of ability, age, gender or race are entitled to equal opportunity in the development of their religious education knowledge.

Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from R.E. as in any school but it is hoped that the majority of parents choosing a Church School would adhere to the R.E. curriculum too. Parents wishing to withdraw their child from one aspect of RE, or the whole curriculum must request this by writing to the Headteacher on an annual basis, outlining their wishes.

Academy Councillor Mr Ayo Akin is the named Academy Councillor responsible for the provision of RE and Collective Worship in school.

Review September 2027