

# St Francis Horndale CE Primary School



## Religious Education Policy

### Our Vision

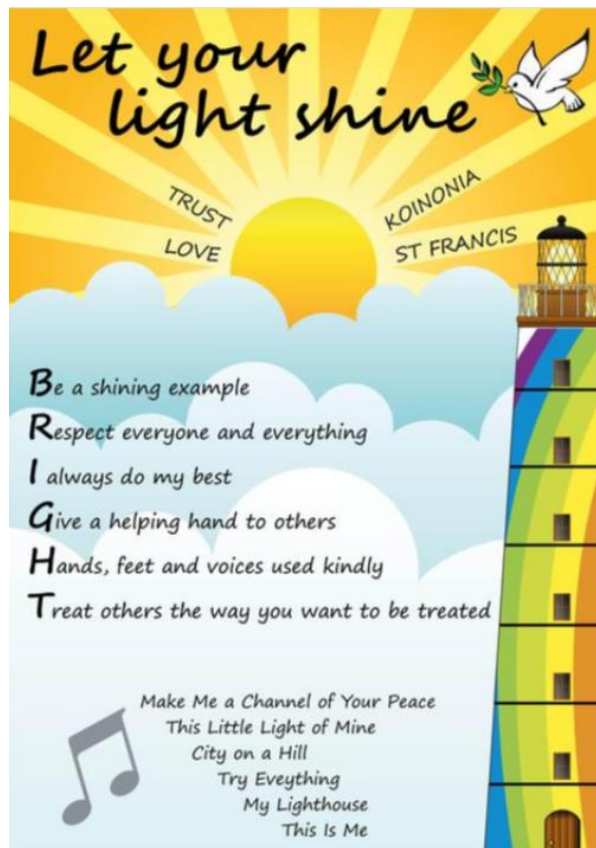
**Let your light shine bright!**  
**#inspiredtoshinebright**

We aim for all our children to achieve their full potential and to thrive in the modern world. We encourage confident and independent global citizens who have a love of learning. This is underpinned by the teaching of Christian values. These enable children to cultivate compassion, integrity, and respect, fostering their overall development and character formation.

Matthew 5: 14-16 provides us with our school vision that helps us live out the school foundation of educating children living in poverty. Matthew teaches us the need for self-worth, self-confidence and resilience to find and then shine our lights bright. By shining we support the academic and personal development of ourselves and our wider school family.

Written: July 2025  
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Approved by: Governing Body

## Our school Vision and Values



### How then do we live?

Our vision and values shapes our school life. Daily collective worship is at the centre of school life and enables children to experience the diversity of Christian practice and tradition. High quality, effective, academic religious education allows children and adults alike to flourish. Throughout all our school life our Christian vision and values promote social and cultural development through the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation. They encourage good mental health and enable children and adults, whatever their background or ability, to flourish and live well together. The vision is used to ensure our policies, curriculum and extracurricular opportunities meet the academic and spiritual needs of all learners. We describe all our activities in terms of how the vision and values inspire our whole school community, children and adults, to engage in social action and to be courageous advocates for change in their local, national and global communities Our Christian vision supports the character and moral development of all children and adults, giving them aspiration for themselves and hope for the communities of which they are a part. It fosters dignity and respect, enabling everyone to be the person God created them to be, to achieve the most they can, and to inspire hope for others in the local community and beyond.

## Religious Education Policy

At St Francis Horndale CE Primary School, Religious Education is an integral part of our school life. We are a Voluntary Aided School with a Christian foundation and, as such, Christianity forms the basis of all teaching in the school and how we treat each other. The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear and workable framework for the learning and teaching of RE at St Francis Horndale and to establish a common purpose amongst staff and children, which may be clearly understood by parents, Governors, Diocese and external agencies. At St Francis Horndale, children and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We teach according to the Durham Agreed Syllabus. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. For LKS2 50% of the planned curriculum is Christianity with 66% in UKS2. Links with our school vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied. IN addition to the RE lessons, we provide enrichment through whole school events in which children can share their Religious Education knowledge with others.

### Philosophy

The knowledge and understand children will develop though our planned religious education curriculum should enable every child to shine their light bright as global citizens in our diverse world. It will enable children 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)

Understanding Christianity teaches children through the lens of philosophy and human and social science. We have added philosophy for children to our planned curriculum as part of this. We teach children the skills of critical, caring, creative and collaborative thinking. Teachers support children to apply these thinking skills in their RE lessons. During Autumn and Summer term in Year 4, creation is a focus in the philosophy learning. In Year 6, in their philosophy lesson discuss the question 'Can Christian Aid and Islamic relief change the world?'

### Aims and objectives

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. We develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, working from children's starting points. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other religions and non-religious worldviews beyond the six principle religions, providing the foundation for children to

know about and understand the diversity of beliefs and practices in the world in which we live.

Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all children::

- *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 develop deepening knowledge and understanding about a range of religious and nonreligious worldviews so that they can:*
  - *describe and explain beliefs and theological concepts o describe and explain some sources of authority and teachings within and across religious and non-religious traditions*
  - *describe and explain ways in which beliefs are expressed*
  - *know and understand the significance and impact of beliefs and practices on individuals, communities and societies - connect these together into a coherent framework of beliefs and practices*
- *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.*
- *gain and deploy deepening understanding of specialist vocabulary and terms*
- *know and understand about religious diversity within the region*
- *gain and deploy skills that enable critical thinking and enquiry in relation to the material they study*
- *reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, experiences, ideas, values and beliefs with increasing discernment*

The teaching of RE underpins the aims of the school: we have a positive, caring ethos founded on Christian beliefs, where all children are valued and respected and encouraged to maximise their potential; every child matters and every success is celebrated; our children will leave us as good citizens, feeling fulfilled, challenged and inspired, and with a solid Christian foundation.

### The legal position of Religious Education

Religious Education must be provided for all registered children in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request. (DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28) The law relating to Religious Education for children who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered children at the school', it includes children in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE. 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 importance placed on RE as a core subject in a church school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all children, by all staff. Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. We ask that and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

### Teaching and learning

Allocation of time for RE recommended as the minimum entitlement of 45 hours for KS2, which approximates to 5% of curriculum time, or roughly one hour 15 minutes per week.

Religious Education contributes dynamically to children' education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE children learn about religious and nonreligious worldviews in order to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to interpret, analyse, evaluate and critically respond to the claims that religious and non-religious worldviews make. Children learn to express their insights and to agree or disagree respectfully. At St Francis Horndale, Religious Education offers opportunities for personal reflection and children' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as it encourages children to examine the significance of their learning in relation to themselves and others. It enables children to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or not), ideas, feelings, experiences and values in the light of what they learn. Religious Education encourages empathy and respect. It enables children to develop their own sense of identity and belonging. It also promotes respect for the right of others to hold different beliefs, values and ideas.

### Curriculum planning in Religious Education

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects. This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all children to flourish from their starting points.
- enables children to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- provides opportunities for children to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.

- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.
- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and child grouping as appropriate to children's needs
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all children, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all children's contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

## **Key Stage 2**

- Christianity – beliefs and practices across the denominations and the impact of these for individuals and communities following the Understanding Christianity
- Hinduism – some beliefs and practices and the impact of these for individuals and communities
- Judaism – some beliefs and practices and the impact of these for individuals and communities
- Buddhism – as this would normally be taught in KS1 so it is consolidated in KS2
- Islam – some beliefs and practices and the impact of these for individuals and communities
- Humanism - some beliefs and practices and the impact of these for individuals and communities
- Thematic units including: Festivals, significant life events and pilgrimage

## **Teaching and learning**

We recognise the importance of teaching RE in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all children, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging.

Children experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry- based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Researching information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other children.
- Engaging in pair and group work.

- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Taking time for reflection.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. Questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect. Teaching enables children to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

## **The Role of the Religious Education Subject Coordinator**

The subject coordinator will:

- Ensure that all children receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work through weekly book looks with teachers, termly deep dive monitoring including child and staff voice
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and children' progress and standards.
- Ensure there are assessment systems in place to enable teachers and children to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Monitor RE assessments carried out by staff.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.

## **Assessment**

Assessment of children's progress in RE is ongoing. As a piece of work is completed, it is marked and teachers check for and address any misunderstanding or misconceptions. At the end of each unit, children complete a written end of unit assessment and children are able to refer back to their own book/work from the unit to help them answer and reflect on what they have learnt. Teachers use this,

together with their informal judgements made during lesson observations and marking, to inform their judgement against the insight objectives – these are recorded on our insight tracking system and help to give a full picture of individual attainment by the end of each phase. Recording of assessment against Insight tracking happens termly, is analysed annually and informs the IQ6 and 7.

Checklists are given in lessons to allow children a time to reflect and self-assess against the criteria. This is then also assessed by the teacher when marking work.

Assessment in RE will:

- Include child self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of child progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.