

The Quality of Education: RE - Purpose and Provision



St Christopher's:
A Church of England Academy

That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither-
whatever they do prospers.

Psalm 1:3

The Purpose of Study

The aims of Religious Education, as informed by the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, are:

- To enable pupils to encounter the person and ministry of Jesus Christ, as the centre of the Christian religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today;
- To enable pupils to learn about other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents;
- To develop understanding of all religious faith as the search for and expression of truth;
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs.

The outcomes for pupils at the end of their education at St. Christopher's are that they are able to:

- Think theologically and reflect critically on ultimate questions;
- Reflect critically on the truth claims within religions and beliefs;
- Analyse, interpret and apply sacred texts, particularly the Bible;
- Recognise that faith is commitment to a particular way of understanding and responding to God and the world;
- Analyse and explain the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community;
- Make a well-informed response to the claims of Jesus Christ and the Christian Faith;
- Respect those of all religions and beliefs in their search for meaning;
- Reflect critically on shared and diverse beliefs and practices.

Complementing the School Purpose

Religious Education at St. Christopher's, complements the whole school curriculum purpose and plays an important role in supporting the school's duty to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

Foundation Scripture

Our deepest desire is that all our pupils (and staff) are blessed as they are enabled through their RE lessons to not walk in step with the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or to sit in the company of mockers. Pupils are encouraged to meditate on the Law of the Lord – the Bible, underpinning, as it does, our curriculum from Y7 through to Y11. We proactively promote "delight" in God's Law, confident that our pupils leave us aged 16 or 18 like "trees planted by streams of water which yield (their) fruit in season.... Whatever they do prospers." We are constantly humbled by the countless examples of ex-pupils who get back in touch with us to tell us of their exploits all across the earth, working for Christian charities as courageous advocates for justice and social change. Often, these individuals are fuelled by a Biblical faith that was cultivated during their time with us. One recent example was a girl who left our 6th form to train with a Christian charity in America before spending several months rescuing human trafficked working girls from the streets of Bangkok, before going on to serve in Uganda. Such pupils are living embodiments of our Foundation Scripture.

Key Themes

Securing wisdom and understanding

The RE curriculum aims to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve. Religious Education at St. Christopher's is a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable subject for all pupils, whilst remaining academic, creative, challenging and rigorous. The knowledge, skills, wisdom and understanding outlined throughout our units of study are designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils.

Religious Education at St. Christopher's promotes an enquiry approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. This approach is carefully layered to become more demanding and complex over time. For example, the Archbishop of York's young leaders' award in Year 8 builds on the strong scriptural foundations laid in Year 7 through our 'Bible: the big story' unit. This gives pupils ample opportunity to put their faith into practice through community action projects, empowering them to, in the words of the award scheme: 'be the change they want to see.' The Year 9 curriculum then carefully blends the Diocesan 'Illuminating Pathways' scheme of work with the GCSE Specification so that pupils receive the best of both worlds and are therefore fully prepared for their GCSE studies in Years 10 and 11. This enables pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views in a reasoned and informed manner, thereby securing wisdom and understanding.

Learning how to live well together

Religious Education at St. Christopher's recognises the changing nature of society, including changes in religious practice and expression, and the influence of religion in the local, national and global community. As such it prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences that may come to them in later life. Religious Education at St. Christopher's seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others. There is a deliberate and relentless focus on the shared human experience that is at the core of all religious belief and practice. For example, a study of the temptations of Christ in Year 7 includes a focus on why 11 and 12 year olds might find themselves doing things that they really don't want to be doing in certain contexts. Using the life of Christ as our example, we then look at how to overcome this difficulty. This helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religions and beliefs in the world today and to learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other.

Knowing what it is to be fully alive

St. Christopher's RE curriculum plays a significant role in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) and prepares all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of living life in all its fullness.

Through Religious Education programmes of study, pupils are enabled to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. A particularly effective example here is the Diocesan 'illuminating pathways' unit on 'How does the Media portray Islam?' Barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding are dismantled for our pupils here as they are empowered to see things as they really are; especially important for our church school pupils, growing up in 21st century East Lancashire.

The programmes of study aim to promote religious understanding, discernment and respect and to challenge prejudice and stereotyping. A sense of self-worth, encouraged through the units, helps pupils to reflect on their uniqueness as human beings, share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships. This is true throughout our work, but can be seen especially in units such as: 'What happens when courage and faith collide?' in Year 7; 'Do sacred texts enable individuals and groups to support faith in times of crisis?' in Year 8; and 'What is the impact of difference and diversity on faith communities?' in Year 9. As a result, the impact of and connections made, underpin lifelong learning for the future and help pupils know what it is to be fully alive.

Core Virtues

Religious Education at St. Christopher's actively promotes the school's core virtues of forgiveness, friendship, hope, justice, love, peace and trust, as well as respect for all and care of the environment. We achieve this through the content of our curriculum, as well as our staff ensuring that they do not miss any opportunity to reinforce our core virtues as part of their routine classroom delivery. Religious Education places emphasis on pupils valuing themselves and others and the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences.

Complementing the School Provision

The Religious Education department's approaches to teaching reflect the rich and diverse skill set of our 6 subject specialists in the department. All are highly qualified, experienced, take full responsibility for their own CPD and are empowered to teach to their strengths. Our academic outcomes for pupils speak for themselves.

Religious Education is compulsory for all up to and including KS5 at St. Christopher's, and pupils' positive attitudes towards the subject are not taken for granted. Occasionally, in consultation with parents, we deem it to be in the best interests of a small minority of pupils for us to take advantage of AQA's short course GCSE provision. The momentum of decades of high achievement and the good reputation of the department amongst parents ensures that undesirable pupil attitudes are rarely witnessed.

The RE department is closely connected to the worshipping life of the school at all levels, and pupils make this connection explicitly when prompted. The many and varied expressions of that worshipping life including lunchtime and after school clubs, means that we can state with confidence that our extra-curricular and enrichment provision is extremely healthy. Although this spiritual extra-curricular provision is separate and distinct from the RE, the two are closely connected and complement each other well. We ensure that we take the opportunity annually to visit both Jewish and Islamic places of worship to support our delivery of the GCSE Specifications, and we provide pupils with a rich diet of guest speakers every year, especially in preparation for their examinations. Innovative strategies to improve exam performance, such as the implementation of GCSE VIVA (Oral) exams have characterized our approach in recent years.

Every opportunity is taken to make whole school and cross-curricular links, especially with reading, where we provide ample opportunity to study sacred texts from Year 7 through to Year 11. RE is literacy-rich, and pupils have many opportunities to be supported in their literacy learning through subject specific emphases, especially on texts, and the ability to write well argued, balanced answers, with logical chains of reasoning and a justified personal conclusion. Oracy is explicitly promoted in RE lessons too. In tackling controversial ethical issues and creating reasonable thinkers, our belief is that "if pupils can say it, they can write it." There is always a strong emphasis on discussion and debate. We play our part to support numeracy across the curriculum wherever possible, drawing graphs, drawing attention to any simple calculations as well as focusing on the most effective ways to financially help the poor. Much of our emphasis on environmental awareness at both key stages supports pupils' learning in Science and Geography. We proactively promote an appreciation of spiritual art and music, and engage in a relentlessly holistic approach, including body, mind and spirit, much of which supports the PE curriculum. For example, our department has published sport-based revision materials with a spiritual 'thought for the day' focus. We explicitly promote the value of learning modern foreign languages by making links to ancient languages when studying holy books. The RE department's emphasis on the ethics of modern technology supports the work of the Technology department.


Our all-inclusive approach in the RE department, reflecting the school's Christian Virtues in all we do, means that all, ranging from the most able, through to those with particular SEND needs, especially including PP pupils, and all in between, are provided for, to the best of our ability. Everything we do, including all visiting speakers and external visits are deliberately accessible to all, and none are excluded.





Ad Gloriam Dei

To the Glory of God



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