

# **Cragside Church of England Primary School**



## **Religious Education Policy**

Revised: January 2026

Date of next Review: January 2027

The content of some of this policy is based on information from The National Society and Northumberland SACRE. The policy is devised to meet the needs of the learners at Cragside Church of England Primary School, conscious of the Christian foundation of our school and the need for the teaching of RE to be relevant and engaging for all at Cragside.

### **Other Relevant Documentation:**

- Northumberland Locally Agreed Syllabus

**(This document is available in an alternative format  
and in an alternative language on request)**

## School's theologically-rooted Christian Vision

Our Christian vision is to follow Jesus' teaching, helping us to strive for excellence in all that we do and flourish as unique individuals so that all can 'Shine Bright'. This is underpinned by Jesus teaching in Matthew's Gospel that everyone should 'Let your light shine...'

The Cragside family is special and we aim for all our members to be independent, enthusiastic learners and responsible citizens, living up to their true potential, being all that they can be by looking in, at themselves, looking out, towards others and looking up towards God and/or as part of their own spiritual journey. Throughout their time in school everyone is encouraged to have confidence in their own abilities so that they have the opportunity to achieve their potential and feel empowered to use their voice to enable themselves and others to flourish and shine. We promote mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding and encourage respect, responsibility and individuality. Positive and caring relationships are the thread which weaves through all of our school community-relationships where all are valued and all value each other. All children, staff and families in school are celebrated as unique individuals who are valued, loved, celebrated and supported. We strive to enable all to SHINE BRIGHT and flourish at Cragside.

*Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

### Introduction

At Cragside Church of England Primary School, we seek to live out the Christian and British values which are at the heart of our school and expressed in our mission statement, our school value statement and the set of SHINE BRIGHT code of conduct we have at school. Our constant and relentless drive is that there should be **high achievement for all** at Cragside.

This policy describes our values and philosophy in relation to meeting the needs of all learners at Cragside. It outlines the framework within which all staff work and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It is designed to describe how the school intends to meet the needs of learners of all ages, groups and abilities.

### Rationale

At Cragside Church of England Primary School we recognise that children growing up in a rapidly changing society need to have a firm foundation of values and beliefs. These values and beliefs are an inherent part of the whole school ethos and are underpinned through the teaching of religious education. Cragside is a voluntary controlled, Church of England Primary school.

Religious education explores the questions of life and the processes of living with others. This is taught through the Northumberland RE Syllabus 2022

'The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.'

## **Aims and objectives**

Religious Education provides an opportunity for children to consider and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by humans about life and its purpose. At Cragside Church of England Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of religious and non religious worldviews, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity, other world religions and non religious world views. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop an understanding of the impact faith can have on the life of a believer as well as developing their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

### **The aims of Religious Education are:**

1. To make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews, so that children can:
  - identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using 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
2. To understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews, so that children 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
3. To make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that children 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 studied, and allow the ideas studied to 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
4. 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.
5. To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and non-religious worldviews, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.

6. To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

7. To be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;

8. To develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;

9. To develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;

10. To have respect for and tolerance of other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

11. To develop the skills to handle, read and understand the Bible and other religious texts and understand their relevance to people of faith;

## **Religious Education-Legal Background**

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the Reception class who are less than five years old.

The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. However, parents who choose to send their children to a church school, will understand that religion is a core curriculum subject at Cragside. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

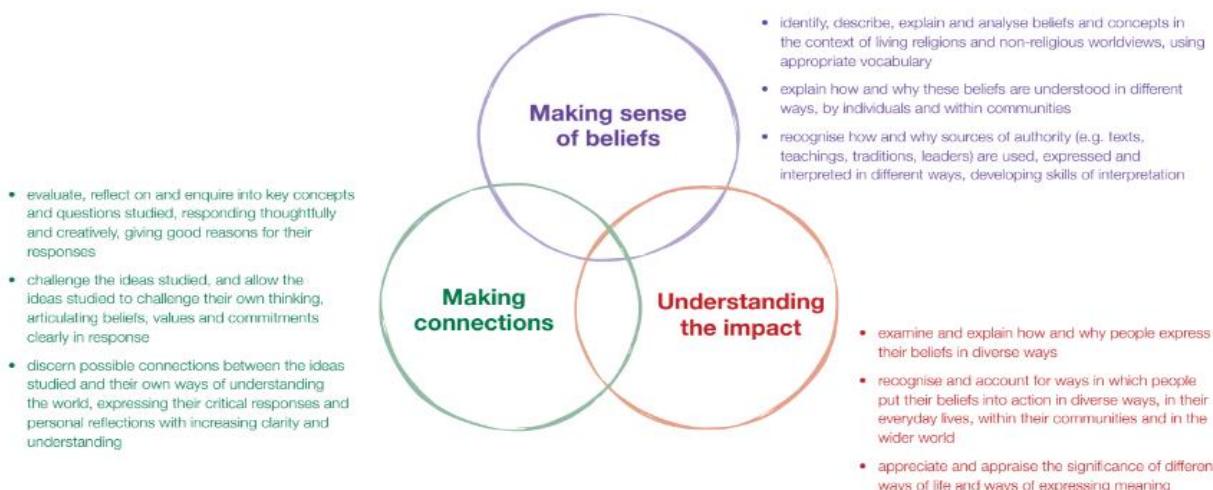
## Teaching and Learning Styles

Appropriate to their age at the end of their education in Church schools, the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and non-religious worldviews in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and worldviews to their own.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.'

Our teaching is underpinned by three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs:

(taken from Northumberland Agreed Syllabus)



Long term and short term plans ensure that substantive, personal and disciplinary knowledge is woven together to promote a deep and rich understanding of faith and belief in the world today and to encourage children to think critically.

Lessons will be planned using a case study approach and by encouraging children to think like Theologians, Philosophers and Human and Social Scientists. Lessons will be planned through the eyes of three characters 'Theo', 'Livvy' and 'Sophie' (see Appendix 1) who ask questions and share ideas encouraging children to engage with the substantive and personal knowledge covered in RE through different lenses.

Lesson will be planned using The Northumberland Agreed Syllabus which is a spiralised curriculum, focusing on breadth and depth of knowledge. The units are outlined in the long term whole school overview which ensures clear progression in RE teaching across the school.

Within RE sessions a variety of teaching and learning activities will take place. These could include but are not limited to:

- Using case studies and real-life examples of people of with a range of worldviews and faiths.
- Resources and texts which are carefully chosen through EDJI lens to ensure a range of representations and diversity of coverage and knowledge of faith and worldviews.
- Whole class and small group discussions of religious and moral issues.
- Hermeneutics to explore religious texts and stories.

- Learning about the key beliefs and practices of Christianity and other world faiths and non-religious world views.
- Visiting places of worship.
- Discussions with religious leaders and people who hold religious and non-religious beliefs.
- Use of drama and art to explore religious stories and concepts.
- Extended writing
- Research
- Writing poetry or reflections on faith and belief
- Practical activities linked to faith in action.
- Comparing the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals.

This will enable children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking.

Children carry out research into religious topics.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- providing resources and scaffolds, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using adults to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

## **Curriculum Planning in Religious Education**

Our RE curriculum is based on a multidisciplinary approach and exploring 'The Big Questions' which people may have about faith. This will support the children in developing critical thinking skills.

Lesson will be planned using The Northumberland Agreed Syllabus. The units are outlined in the long-term whole school overview which ensures clear progression in RE teaching across the school.

All teachers have received CPD on the RE curriculum and the types of knowledge in RE. They are given guidance on how to plan and record evidence of teaching in RE.

The class teacher creates the short term plans using the long term overview and curriculum materials as a starting point. They consider which character will help children to think about the substantive knowledge in each lesson and ensure there is a balance of Theology, Philosophy and Human & Social Sciences throughout the year. Plans can take the form of SMART or PowerPoint Slides; resources for the lesson; annotations on the Agreed Syllabus or their own written plans.

The RE lead monitors the impact of the planning by carrying out regular scrutinies of work and then gives individual feedback and support to teachers as needed. This ensures the curriculum is implemented consistently throughout school.

## **Contribution of Religious Education to the Teaching of other Subjects**

### **English**

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in English have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

### **Computing**

We use Computing where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use Computing to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation. Increasingly, a greater number of Apps are available to support the teaching of RE, as the school develops the use of tablet technology, we envisage that the use of relevant Apps will increase further.

### **Relationships, Personal, social and health education (RPSHE) and citizenship**

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

### **RE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)**

Although the whole curriculum should contribute to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, it is widely recognised that RE can make a unique contribution to SMSC development and the Agreed Syllabus reflects this.

#### **RE provides opportunities for spiritual development by helping pupils:**

- Consider and respond to questions of meaning and purpose in life, and to consider and respond to questions about the nature of values in human society. It encourages them to look out towards others and consider their opinions and ideas. It encourages them to look in at themselves and their personal world view and it encourages them to look up by considering how others and they might encounter God or something bigger than themselves.

#### **RE provides opportunities for moral development by helping pupils:**

- Consider and respond to aspects of morality by using their knowledge and understanding of religious and ethical teaching, and enabling them to make responsible and informed judgements about religious and moral issues.

#### **RE provides opportunities for social development by helping pupils:**

- Develop their sense of identity and belonging, and by preparing them for life as responsible citizens in an increasingly diverse society.

#### **RE provides opportunities for cultural development by:**

- Fostering pupils' awareness and understanding of a range of beliefs and practices in the community and the wider world, and by exploring issues within and between faiths. This will develop their understanding of the cultural contexts within which they and others live.

## **How we support learners with SEND within RE**

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. RE provides an excellent opportunity for children with SEND to shine. We encourage all learners to talk confidently about their own faith and world views and the faiths and world views of others. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. We support children to make progress and achieve in RE by providing resources which scaffold and facilitate their understanding and support children with SEND in engaging in meaningful and purposeful explorations of faith. We ensure that our teaching is matched to each child's needs. The effective use of differentiation, is seen in the planning and resources used.

## **Interventions and resources to support children in RE**

- Rapid response interventions in response to children during teaching sessions
- The use of artefacts
- The use of word/picture mats to scaffold and support high quality discussions
- Pre teaching of key vocabulary and concepts
- The use of high quality texts
- Opportunities to record work in a way which meets children's need e.g. teacher to scribe children's ideas etc.

## **Tracking Attainment and Progress in Religious Education**

Teachers assess children against the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus unit outcomes. This assessment is carried out at the end of each unit and the information is shared with the RE lead. Parents will be updated about their child's progress and achievement in this subject via the written end of year summative report.

## **RE and Race Equality**

Northumberland's faith communities can be thought of as a resource that schools and teachers might use sensitively and responsibly. Houses of worship and community centres can be visited, and believers can support learning in the classroom. Members of faith communities can offer insights beyond more than merely their religious beliefs and practices by developing knowledge and understanding about the broader cultural context within which the faith operates and exists. As such, the teaching of RE can evolve seamlessly into multicultural and multiracial awareness.

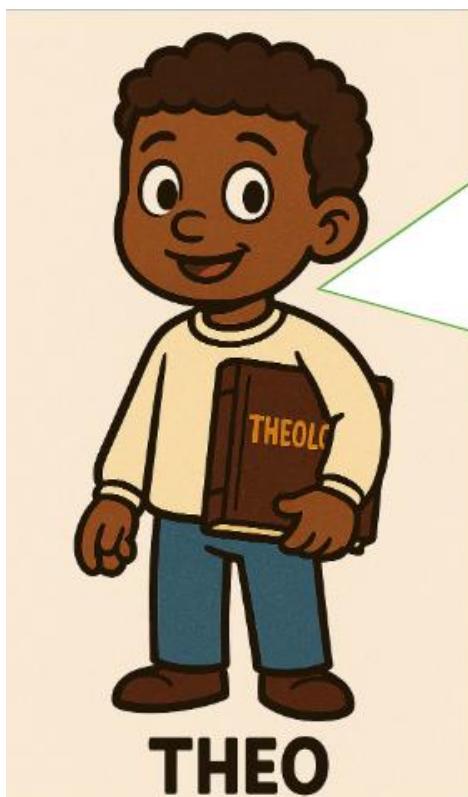
## **Monitoring and Review**

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The R.E. subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual action plan that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

The school has a named Governor responsible for monitoring our foundation as a Church of England school, including the teaching and learning of RE. The subject leader will meet with the named Governor as part of the self-review cycle in our school.

She has specially-allocated time during the course of the academic year for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work, assessment analysis and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

## Appendix 1 – Cragside Characters.



I'm Theo and I like to study Theology. I like to find out what people believe, where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time.

I also like to think find out how different beliefs/concepts connect to each other within an overarching worldview and how different people understand and engage with their beliefs differently.

A key method used by theologians is hermeneutics (which means reading and interpreting texts )



Some  
questions I  
might ask

- What is the story about?
- Who is this story about?
- What happens in this story?
- Why is this important?
- How can it help us understand the 'hidden meaning' of the story?
- What is this text / source of authority about?
- Who is it significant to?
- Why is it significant to them?
- How is this source of authority used?
- Has the way in which it is used or interpreted changed over time?
- Is it used differently in different contexts and if so, why?
- How (if at all) does it relate to other sources of authority within this worldview?
- Where/when/why was this written?
- Does everyone draw the same meaning from this text?
- If not, why not?
- How might context affect how someone understands the meaning of the text?
- What genre is this source of authority?
- How might this affect the way in which it is read/interpreted?



I'm Livvy and I like to study Human and Social Sciences such as History, Geography and Sociology.

I like to find out about the way people live and why they live in the ways that they do.

I am particularly interested in how context affects ways of living.

Key methods used by human and social scientists include surveys, interviews, ethnographic study and analysis of data.



Some questions I might ask

- What is this?
- How is this used?
- Who uses this?
- Where might I find this?
- When is this used?

- What is happening here?
- When is this?
- How do I know?
- Who does this? How do they do it? Why do they do it like this?
- Is this done the same way today as it was in the past?
- Is it done the same way in one place as in another?
- Is this done the same way by one person as another?
- What does this tell me about how context affects this activity?
- Does everyone use this thing in the same way? If not, why not?
- What happens here? Would it happen the same or differently somewhere else? Why?
- Where is this information from? Does this matter? How might this make a difference to the way I understand it? How else can we find out about this?
- How might someone's worldview affect the way in which they analyse this information? How might my worldview affect the way in which I analyse this information?

I'm Sophie and I like to study Philosophy.

Philosophy literally means the 'love of wisdom'.

I am interested in what we know and how we know it. Philosophers ask questions about how people think or reason about the world around them, and how we can know what is true or real.

Key methods used by philosophers include thought experiments, debate, critical thinking and processes of reasoning .



**SOPHIE**



SOPHIE

Some questions I might ask

- What questions do I have about this thing?
- What do I think about this?
- What questions could I ask about this?
- What are good questions to ask? What are bad questions to ask?
- How do we know?
- How might asking questions help us to know more and to think more deeply?
- How does this way of thinking about [x] tell us more about this person's understanding of 'right' and 'wrong'?
- What questions do I have about this?
- What questions do others ask about this?
- Do we all have the same questions? Why do I think this?
- Do I think the same thing as others? (If not, why not?)
- How does this person think about what it means to live a 'good' life? Why do they think this? What does this tell us about what they understand 'good' (and 'bad') to be?
- How might my/someone's worldview impact on the way I/they think about this?
- Based on what we have learned about [x], how might this person justify that doing this is the right / wrong thing to do?
- How do we know what we know? What evidence do we / I have? Can I give a reason why I think what I think?
- Is this/your argument/position coherent/reliable? Does this make sense? How do we know? Is this a well-structured argument?
- What evidence is there to support this? What different types of evidence might there be? Are all types of evidence equally valid? Why/why not?