# Blaenavon Heritage Voluntary Controlled Primary School



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Author: Mrs K Hughes

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CoG:

**INTRODUCTION**
This document sets out the policy of Blaenavon Heritage Voluntary Controlled Primary School in the respect of teaching and learning of Religious Education.

**ETHOS STATEMENT**
Church in Wales schools are designated, through the Religious Character of Schools (Designation Procedure) 1998, as having a religious character. The following ethos statement has been adopted by all Church in Wales schools:

*Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church in Wales and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.*

*The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.*

**RE MISSION STATEMENT**
At Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School we believe that religious education should make an important contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We aim to:
- Provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own beliefs;
- Promote tolerance, empathy and understanding of religions, cultures and moral issues of our communities and the wider world;
- Share joy, sorrow and a deeper understanding of God's love;
- Place an emphasis on loyalty to friends and try to encourage a sense of commitment and belonging. Above all, our children are encouraged to learn to live and work together in harmony, so that they grow up aware of the wonder of life and its Creator;
- Provide opportunities for the whole school community to use and reflect on our whole school agreed Christian values for collective worship (see Appendix 1) and Understanding Christianity resource pack for the teaching of Christianity.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**
Religious Education in Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School is established on the basis of section 26–29 of the Education Act 1944, as amended by the Education Reform Act 1988. The majority of the RE teaching at BHVC is delivered through the Understanding Christianity resource pack. However, the collective worships, reflection area activities and class discussions are delivered through our 'Values' Scheme of Work, which was established in 2014.

This enables the school to base much of its teaching of Christianity on the major festivals of the year, whilst also teaching elements of other major world faiths. Pupils are encouraged to develop Christian values and there is a strong emphasis on learning the difference between right and wrong. A variety of teaching methods is used and RE is linked, where a natural link occurs, to other curriculum areas.

The policy at Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School will comply with the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, which states that all pupils should have an education which is balanced and broadly based and:

a) Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils of the school and of society.
b) Prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The policy will also *'promote respect, understanding and tolerance for those who adhere to different faiths'.*

Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School recognises that the Education Act 1944, re-enacted in the 1988 Act, establishes parents' rights to withdraw their children from Religious Education if they wish. Teachers and Learning Support Assistances (LSAs) can refuse to teach RE (having first given notice to the Head Teacher and governors of their intention).

**AIMS**

Religious Education at Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School should:

a) Introduce the pupils to the challenging nature of religion, in particular the Christian faith (in accordance with the school's Church in Wales Foundation) and other major world faiths.
b) To help pupils in their personal search for the meaning and purpose of life through an exploration of religious beliefs and practices.
c) Make an important contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the content taught and the teaching methods used.
d) Be taught in a way that is interesting, challenging and relevant to the pupils. It must also ensure that it provides opportunities for the pupils to reach their full potential.
e) Not be restricted to mere study of religious facts and practices. It should also provide opportunities for involvement in, or experience of some creative aspect of religious belief.
f) To encourage pupils to reflect on their own beliefs whilst appreciating the need for tolerance, sensitivity and respect for the beliefs of others.
g) Provide opportunities for developing a sense of awe, wonder, joy and thankfulness – so reaching beyond the mundane and the ordinary.

**OBJECTIVES**

Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary School will meet these aims by giving the pupils the opportunity to:

- Explore and plan activities from the Understanding Christianity resource pack using the Curriculum map to ensure coverage of all core concepts
- Encounter the teachings and life of Jesus and how they relate to the main Christian festivals.
- Encounter other faith traditions.
- Handle religious artefacts in a way that is respectful and indicates a growing awareness of their importance or special meaning to believers.
- Gain confidence to express their own beliefs, whether religious or not.
- Sustain strong links with St Peter's and St Paul's Churches in Blaenavon, which enriches children's experiences and helps them develop their religious thinking.
- Sustain links with Churches of other denominations to support the curriculum.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE**

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principles that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables 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 Understanding Christianity resource pack.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions, whilst developing their skills in questioning, researching and presenting.

- We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Christmas, and Harvest to develop their religious thinking.
- We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school to talk with and work with the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Where natural links occur, Religious Education may be linked to other curricular areas: if this is not possible it will be taught discretely. Teaching will mainly be a whole class with the opportunity for the children to work as individuals, group work, research, investigation, visits and visitors. Progression and task differentiation will be built in through and across the key stages.

The class teachers will use a variety of methods to encourage an interest in and an awareness of Religious Education, Christian values and an awareness of spirituality.

Opportunities will be made of:

- Christian values-based collective worship
- Circle Time
- SEAL
- Display work
- Drama, dance, music, poetry, written work
- Visits to religious sites
- Handling artefacts
- Research and imagination
- Information technology
- Strong cross curricular links including Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Competency.

**DIFFERENTIATION**

A sensitive and sympathetic approach to classroom teaching and its outcomes will be necessary to convey the nature of Religious Education. The expectation of children's understanding will be diverse across a key stage, and this will be taken into account when the teacher is preparing the lesson. There will be differentiation in teaching method and in outcome as appropriate, to ensure access to the curriculum for all children. We take into account the targets set for individual children, ie Literacy targets, in their Individual Education Programmes (IEPs).

In order to provide for children of different abilities within each class, we endeavour to differentiate tasks in a suitable way by:

- Questioning - by level of questioning appropriate to ability;
- Recording - using a variety of methods according to the differing abilities of the children;
- Text - pupils dealing with the same topic but stimulus material at different levels of difficulty;
- Support - varying levels of support by teaching;
- Task - same text but a variety of tasks set, eg -
  Group 1: answer questions;
  Group 2: writes commentary.
- Organisation - organising resources in classroom to allow for many of the above approaches (different skills learned/ group work).

**CURRICULUM PLANNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

We plan our religious education in accordance with the Curriculum Map for the Understanding Christianity resource pack. We ensure that the curriculum studied in religious education builds upon prior learning and explores the core concepts. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each area and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long term, medium term and short term):

- The long-term plan maps the religious education focus statements from the Understanding Christianity resource pack.
- Our medium-term plans give details of the core concepts and other faiths/important events that need to be taught and explored.
- The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and identifies the specific learning objectives for each lesson with the guidance from the Understanding Christianity resource pack.

**DEVELOPING SKILLS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

Pupils should be given opportunities, where appropriate in their study of RE, to develop and apply:

**Literacy**

Learners are helped to develop their oracy, reading and writing skills using planned opportunities from the LNF (Literacy Numeracy Framework) which will enable them to transfer their skills across the curriculum.

In RE, learners communicate ideas and information in a variety of ways, depending on the nature of the task, audience, purpose and learners' own preferences, including the use of IT at times.

**Numeracy**

Where appropriate, learners develop their number skills across the curriculum.

**Developing Thinking and Problem Solving**
Learners develop their thinking across the curriculum through the process of enquiring, researching and presenting.

**Developing Digital Competence**
Where appropriate, learners will be given the opportunity to develop the 4 strands of the Digital Competency Framework (DCF):

1. Citizenship;
2. Interacting and Collaborating;
3. Producing; and
4. Data and Computational Thinking.

These 4 strands are designed to develop pupils' digital skills for the ever-changing digital world in which we live.

1 **Citizenship**, which includes:
Identity, image and reputation
Health and wellbeing
Digital rights, licensing and ownership
Online behaviour and cyber bullying

2 **Interacting and Collaborating**, which includes:
Communication
Caring and sharing

3 **Producing**, which includes:
Planning, sourcing and searching
Creating
Evaluating and improving

4 **Data and Computational Thinking**, which includes:
Problem solving and modelling
Data and information literacy.

**CURRICULUM CYMRAEG**
RE contributes to Curriculum Cymraeg by the use of contexts that are relevant to the learners' lives in Wales. The unique 'Welshness' of our religious heritage will be conveyed to the pupils through:

- Visits to religious sites (parish church, chapels, the Diocesan Cathedral Church);
- The use of the Church in Wales Liturgy;
- The Welsh language in worship and Bibles;
- The life and work of Celtic Saints;
- The early Church in Wales' pilgrimage.

**PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION**
Through our religious education lessons, Collective Worship and circle time opportunities, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We 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 society.

**THE EQUALITIES ACT 2010**

As a school, we are committed to carrying out our statutory duties to actively support and ensure that all of the school community complies with the requirements of the new Act. Therefore:

- We are committed to providing a teaching environment conducive to learning. Each child is valued, respected and challenged regardless of ability, race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.
- More able children will be challenged and motivated by differentiated work given by the teacher, appropriate to his or her needs. Teachers will also use questions that allow the more able child to maintain their involvement in the lesson and demonstrate their knowledge and abilities.
- Most RE lessons are appropriate for all children since the teacher will differentiate as necessary for those children with additional learning needs. A pupil whose difficulties are severe or complex may need to be supported by a teaching assistant, in addition to appropriately differentiated tasks given by the teacher.

**SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Through teaching Religious Education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. Our teaching in Religious Education challenges racial prejudice and stereotypes, and we foster pupils' critical awareness of bias, inequality and injustice to help them identify and challenge racial, religious and cultural discrimination.

At Blaenavon, we promote cultural diversity through teaching a balance of positive and culturally diverse content. Our resources and displays (our reflective areas) portray positive images of a range of people and cultures and challenge stereotypes and racism across the curriculum.

**MARKING OF WORK**

Religious Education will be marked in accordance with the marking policy of the school.

**THE ROLE OF THE RE CO-ORDINATOR**

- To take the lead in policy development and the production of schemes of work.
- To produce long term and medium-term planning in consultation with the other staff.
- To support the staff in the development of weekly teaching plans and the general implementation of the Understanding Christianity resource pack.
- To monitor the teaching process.
- To liaise with the Head Teacher on the purchase of resources.
- To keep up to date with developments in RE, to attend appropriate INSET and to disseminate information to colleagues.

**MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

- The class teacher will evaluate the teaching and learning opportunities in their own class, using the weekly planning pro forma. Evaluations will feed the teacher's future planning and any concerns should be raised with the curriculum leader.
- The curriculum leader and senior management team are responsible for the monitoring of standards in RE annually.

**ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING**

Assessment in RE is ongoing and formative, with a variety of strategies used, such as observation, discussion, marking and questioning. Assessment for learning, which is becoming embedded in the school, encourages children to be more involved in their learning in RE.

The most significant source of evidence for children's achievement will come from the ongoing evaluation of lessons and INCERTs.

Information from assessment is used to inform the teacher's short-term planning and to help the teacher identify ways forward for the pupils' learning.

Pupils' progress in RE is recorded using INCERTs and teachers' marking.

A process of formal assessment is being developed and trialled by the subject leader and will be reviewed and revised accordingly.

**PERSONNEL**

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|---|---|
| RE Subject Leader: | Kerry Hughes |
| Chair of Governors: | Ann Morgan |
| Foundation Governor: | Heather Watkins |
| Ex Officio Governor: | Rev Chris Walters |
| Link Officer: | To be decided |

**Local Community**

The school invites visitors from the church to lead worship and to work with pupils in the school.

**RESOURCES**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education topics. There is a set of Bibles for both key stages and a collection of religious artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education.

**REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the staff and Governing Body.

# Cycle A

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|---|---|
| Autumn 1 | Trust |
| Autumn 2 | Humility |
| Spring 1 | Truthfulness |
| Spring 2 | Perseverance |
| Summer 1 | Forgiveness |
| Summer 2 | Responsibility |

# Cycle B

| | |
|---|---|
| Autumn 1 | Respect |
| Autumn 2 | Peace |
| Spring 1 | Compassion |
| Spring 2 | Courage |
| Summer 1 | Justice |
| Summer 2 | Thankfulness |