Religious Education Policy



For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11

Date of policy/review	Author	Approved by	Signature	Date for review
Sept 2025	J Dawes		See Paper Copy	Summer 2028

Mission Statement of Nutgrove Methodist Primary School

Nutgrove Methodist Primary School strives to provide a caring environment in which every individual can achieve his or her full potential, without limits.

This is encompassed by our Bible verse For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11.

To achieve this, we wish to create a happy, secure and purposeful culture throughout the school, which is conducive to learning and high standards, and is based on our Christian values, love, hope and respect.

Our school's motto and vision is 'My Best, Always, Everywhere' which is interwoven within our curriculum intent and design.

Safeguarding Statement

At Nutgrove Methodist Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

Introduction

Here at Nutgrove Methodist Primary School we believe that Religious Education (RE) has an important role in reflecting and conveying the distinctively Christian character of our school, always aiming for the highest standard and always striving for excellence.

Vision for RE

As a Methodist school, the RE curriculum is central to the whole school curriculum and permeates through all subjects and through the whole of school life. At Nutgrove, RE is given a high priority as we recognise the importance of RE in shaping the lives of pupils. RE encourages pupils to consider the big questions in life, to think for themselves, develop opinions, consider issues of right and wrong and understand the world around them.
Knowledge of different religions and beliefs helps to develop good citizens of the future who love their neighbour.

Context

Nutgrove Methodist Primary is an average-sized primary school, serving children in the age range 4 – 11.

We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome diversity and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child.

We are fortunate to have the active support of religious and non-religious members of our local community to support our teaching of RE. The school maintains close links with the Sankey Valley Methodist Circuit. It also endeavours to maintain links with other local churches from other denominations e.g. St Helens Christian Life Centre (Elim), St James CE Church and St Austin's Catholic Church. There is the opportunity for staff to forge links with parents/members of the community from different faiths and cultures as well as visit places of worship other than Christian in the region

We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in these areas.

Although Religious Education and Collective Worship naturally complement and enrich one another, they are managed separately.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Collective Worship Policy and the PSHE/RSE Policy.

Legal framework

This policy will have consideration for and comply with the following legislation:

- Education Act 2002
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

This policy will also have due regard to the following statutory and non-statutory guidance:

- Religious Education in Schools – February 2010
- The rites, practices and doctrines of the Methodist Church as laid down in the Trust Deed.

Roles and Responsibilities

- This policy has been reviewed and written in consultation with the Epworth Education Trust, Governors and staff and is based on advice from the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education.
- The Exec Headteacher, as SIAMS lead, Head of School and RE leader are all jointly responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy by the staff at Nutgrove.
- The Epworth Education Trust, Governors, Exec Headteacher, Head of School and RE leader must also ensure that:
- All pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum.
- The teaching of RE is well led and effectively managed, and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD).
- Teachers are aware of RE's contribution to developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact on promoting community cohesion.
- Teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion.
- Clear information is provided for parents/carers on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw.
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that we can fulfil our legal obligations regarding RE and pupils can make good progress.

Intent

At Nutgrove Methodist Primary School, we recognise our school context and have designed our curriculum with the intent that pupils build the secure foundations required to become successful and aspirational adults who seek opportunities, take responsibilities as moral citizens and gain life experiences that extend their horizons. We want children to leave school as 'well rounded and responsible' individuals.

The school motto ***'My Best, Always, Everywhere'*** is interwoven within our curriculum intent and design. We have developed three curriculum drivers that shape our curriculum, bring about the aims and values of our school, and to respond to the particular needs of our community:

- **Culture –** helping children develop a wider and deeper knowledge of the locality, society and the world around them, promoting a sense of awe and wonder.
- **Global Citizenship –** Everyone no matter where they live are part of a global community.
- **Diversity** – which helps children recognise differences are positive and that individual characteristics make people unique and everyone should love and be loved without limits.

Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the aims of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- To enable pupils 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.

- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.
- To understand that although we live in a nominally Christian country, it is a fact that many children entering full time education have had little or no experience of either the Christian or any other World Faiths. We cannot, therefore, assume that even in a school with close church connections, pupils will have knowledge of any elements of the Christian Faith. This needs to be constantly kept in mind when considering our aims and objectives for Religious Education.
- To aid pupils on their spiritual journey. Every person is on a spiritual journey; discovering the things that matter, finding out what is of value to themselves, working out how to live, how to treat other people and how to find meaning in their lives. Our aim, then, for pupils of all ages, is to provide a framework in which individuals may explore these aspects of their lives.

At Nutgrove Methodist Primary School we believe that the Religious Education Curriculum will enable pupils to learn about Christianity as a living faith that influences people throughout the world and how it has shaped British culture and heritage.

Living in the United Kingdom is a multi-faith and multicultural society. Children at Nutgrove must learn about people who may be seen as different to themselves and develop an understanding of how individual faiths and cultures affect day to day living. In doing so, we are striving to develop tolerance, respect, empathy and understanding towards all people.

At Nutgrove, we intend to aid pupils on their spiritual journey. Every person is on a spiritual journey; discovering the things that matter, finding out what is of value to themselves, working out how to live, how to treat other people and how to find meaning in their lives. Our intent, then, for pupils of all ages, is to provide a framework in which individuals may explore these aspects of their lives.

Religious education is the vehicle for living the vision of our Church school and should aim to:

- Ensure that the children are asking, investigating and understanding. Provoke religious thinking and allow the children to reflect.
- Enable the children to have informed conversations about religious beliefs and practices to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding and respect of religion and belief (Christian and Non-Christian), of themselves, the world and human experience.
- Widen understanding of Christianity as a living world faith

Religious Education in a Church School lies at the very heart of the curriculum and as such:

- We adopt the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE (The core Syllabus is

'Questful RE Creative and Challenging' revised 2022) which fulfils all legal requirements. The agreed syllabus reflects 'the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking into account the teachings and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.

- The core syllabus is supported by the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Methodist units taught throughout the year groups ensure a Methodist distinctiveness is maintained at Nutgrove.

Appendix 1 (Long term plan) and Appendix 2 and 3 show the Curriculum Overview and specific content of RE at Nutgrove Methodist Primary School. The sequencing of learning ensures age-appropriate learning and ensures a progression of skills acquisition.

We often participate in trials for RE materials and may deviate from the scheme of work as required. For example – evaluation of a set of books - Matthew's Gospel for Durham University. We also take part in other RE activities such as 'Walk through the Bible' programme, Spirited Arts competitions and writing prayers for the Methodist Prayer Handbook.

At Nutgrove, an average of an hour per week of curriculum time in KS1 and KS2 will be devoted to the teaching of RE. This will include distinct syllabus lessons plus teaching related to the Christian Gospel values. As we adopt a creative approach to RE learning there will be cross-curricular links with PSHE, Art, DT, Drama and Music. Of this curricular time, 70% will be devoted to the Christian faith and 30% to Non-Christian Faiths. The other main faiths studied are Judaism and Islam. However, there is an expectation that links will be made to a variety of other faiths if there are links available.

Implementation - Curriculum Design

At Nutgrove we follow a bespoke sequence of learning to meet the needs of pupils.

Class teachers are responsible for their own class organisation and teaching style in relation to Religious Education, while at the same time ensuring these complement and reflect the overall aims and philosophy of the school and this policy.

Teachers may choose to block RE into units of time to provide more flexibility and to accommodate a more topic-based approach allowing for more in-depth and sustained study – particularly at Christmas and Easter. Where this is the case teachers must ensure that at least the allocated curriculum time is adhered to.

All class teachers teach RE. On some occasions, L3 teaching assistants who have the subject knowledge and commitment to professional development to ensure that RE is taught well, will teach RE.

RE in school is taught in line with our school's Teaching and Learning Policy and should reflect the school's commitment to providing the highest quality learning experiences. We aim to ensure

that RE is taught creatively and with meaning. Therefore cross-curricular work is encouraged and we advocate the use of art, drama, thinking skills, speaking and listening activities, visits, posters, photographs, videos, ICT use, display work and other active learning strategies.

Sometimes, certain learning experiences do not always lend themselves to children recording their work formally in their RE book so each class is expected to keep an up to date RE Log as a record to show what work has been covered in these sessions. Good practice is to use a combination of photographs, comments, pictures, key points showing new learning, applying this new learning as well as a wealth of personal and reflective comments in the Log Books.

Good Quality RE Teaching

Teaching in RE is best when teachers require the pupils to:

- Investigate/Enquire – Gather information, ask relevant questions and use different sources.
- Express – explain concepts, rituals and practices – identify and express matters of deep concern by a variety of means – not only through words – respond to religious issues through a variety of media.
- Interpret – draw meaning from artefacts, symbols, stories, poems and art.
- Reflect – ponder on feelings, relationships, experiences, beliefs, values. To think with clarity and care about significant events.
- Empathise – consider the thoughts and feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs of others and see the world through someone else's eyes.
- Apply – apply what has been learnt about a religion to a new situation. Discern - explaining the significance of aspects of religious belief and practice
- Analyse – draw out essential ideas, distinguish between opinion, belief and fact, and distinguish between key features of different faiths.
- Synthesise – make connections between ideas, beliefs, values, practices. Evaluate – refer to different views and use reason to support one's ideas.

Pupils should experience opportunities to:

- Develop morals and attitudes based on Christian traditions i.e. Christian values. Explore and experience the Church's year.
- Study of the story of the local Christian community with its saints and martyrs. Visit places of worship.
- Welcome visitors to share their experience of Christian belief and life.
- Develop skills to confidently use religious language to express knowledge and opinions. Develop the skills to handle the Bible text.
- Listen to Christian 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions. To access Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence.
- Experience a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection.
- Understand how beliefs and philosophies influence people's lives. Help them become

mature and logical thinking.

Nutgrove Primary school is rooted in the Methodist faith and as such pupils will be given the following opportunities:

- To learn about aspects of the Methodist story, its history, traditions and identity and understand what it means to belong to the Methodist Church today.
- To gain an understanding of the life and influence of John Wesley and its implications for present-day Methodists.
- To experience living on a wider map, to understand and challenge injustice and to engage in active global and local citizenship, doing 'all the good you can'.
- To learn about worship in the broad Methodist tradition: engaging and inclusive, formal and informal, traditional and modern, enthusiastic and contemplative
- To learn how music and singing are used as a means of confidently expressing deeper values and convictions.
- To study samples of art in the Methodist Art Collection.
- To learn about: MHA (Methodist Homes for the Aged) - it has the U.K.'s largest faith- based elderly care charity: Action for Children works with vulnerable children and their families and All We Can work with some of the world's poorest communities.

In today's world children should be encouraged to foster respect for the followers of the other world faiths and those of no faith. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of those faiths.

Therefore, RE at Nutgrove should also help pupils to:

- Learn about other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and from them through encounter and dialogue.
- Recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God. Recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths.
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition.
- Access and handle artefacts with care, respect and confidence. Enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions. Understand that some people have no faith.

Impact

Through the teaching of religious education, children should develop religious literacy to be able to access their keywords to help them to discuss, recall knowledge and understand religion in society. At the end of each unit of work, they can answer the Big Question using the correct terminology showing empathy and respect for all.

Specific skills for Religious Education will have been developed including;

EYFS and KS1

- Retelling religious stories.
- Recognising symbols.
- Sharing opinions.
- Asking questions.
- Responding positively to differences and similarities.
- Consideration of the 'Big Questions' in life.

KS2

- Making connections between words of wisdom.
- Reflecting on their own values and those of a believer.
- Understanding different ways of life and ways to express meaning.
- Asking and having the skills to answer, ultimate and ethical questions from their viewpoint and that of a believer.
- Consideration of the 'Big Questions' in life.
- Discussing issues and support the development of community cohesion whilst challenging prejudice.

See appendix 4 and 5 for 'end of key stage expectations' and 'the ladder of expectations taken from the core Blackburn Syllabus - 'Questful RE Creative and Challenging'. The Key stage expectations list expectations by topic for each year group.

Further impact

- Pupils and teachers will be able to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule.
- Pupils will make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity.
- Pupils from Christian families will be able to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith.
- Pupils from other faith backgrounds will understand and be encouraged in their faith. Pupils with no religious background will be given an insight into what it means to be a person of faith.
- Pupils of all backgrounds will have a safe place to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society.
- Pupils and teachers will have developed tolerance and respect.

RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

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

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.

- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and worldviews in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none. Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.
- Become active citizens, serving their neighbour.

Impact on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The teaching of RE, alongside the Worship themes, at Nutgrove Methodist Primary School, has a significant contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development. Teachers ensure the values taught in RE permeate throughout all other areas of the curriculum and are revisited in relation to learning, expectations of behaviour and relationships between all members of the school family.

Through the teaching of RE in our school we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for the child's spiritual development by encouraging them to consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. Through developing their awareness of awe, wonder and mystery in life and through developing their prayer skills and ability to be still and reflective.
- Help the child to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions.
- Enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society.
- Help the child to explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

The contribution of RE to Christian and British values.

At Nutgrove Methodist Primary school the teaching of RE positively drives the promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Principles for Inclusion including SEND pupils, EAL pupils and Able Pupils:

All children will be provided with opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in RE.
All children will have equality of opportunity to achieve their potential. In planning and teaching RE, teachers will have due regard for the following principles:

- Setting suitable learning challenges. Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs and making adaptations where necessary.
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.
- Ensuring challenge and extension when and where appropriate.

CPD

Provision for staff development for the RE Leader and other staff and any governor

training for Religious Education is in line with the school's CPD Policy. Training is accessed through the Service Level Agreement with Blackburn Diocese, MAST and The Sankey Valley Methodist Circuit amongst others. This includes training for Governors as well as teaching and learning staff.

The RE leader regularly attends CPD conferences and courses; training is then disseminated to other staff members through INSET.

ECTs attend training on worship, RE and Spiritual development. A member of staff is trained in delivering Godly Play

For personal CPD teachers can:

- Refer to the latest SIAMS inspection framework relating mainly to RE but also the other sections e.g. Christian distinctiveness and Methodist distinctiveness.
- Use support materials from RE Today/NATRE.
- Use support materials from MAST and Methodist Publishing. Use support materials from Blackburn Diocese.
- Use support materials from Lancashire LA website www.lancsngfl.ac.uk/curriculum/re

Assessment

Teachers consider the growing evidence base in pupil's books and class logs of progress and attainment over time. Assessment tasks in RE are carried out at the end of each half term, and along with the evidence base, this allows teachers to assess pupil's progress. Teachers will use 'the ladder of expectation' from the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE (see Appendix 4 and 5) to assess children's learning. The children will be assessed as Working Towards, Working At, or Working Above in RE. This will be updated at the end of each term. Progress and attainment in RE will be reported to parents in the annual report.

Judgements about the standards of RE in the school are also informed by staff moderation of assessed pieces of children's RE work. These pieces are discussed and collated on a half - termly basis in the whole school moderation portfolio of RE work. A staff meeting each half term is used for the purpose of moderation (Appendix 6)

Resources

Staff are encouraged to keep up to date with resources and to use new stimulating resources as they become available e.g. pictorial-based and ICT-based resources, creative story resources.
The core syllabus of 'Questful RE Creative and Challenging' (revised 2022) will be supported with a wide range of resources which include

- Understanding Christianity documents and access to the website.
- Methodist resources produced by Lat Blaylock for Methodist schools.

Resources on the school server:

- Images produced by Blackburn Diocese to support the curriculum.

- Picturing Jesus.
- Picturing Easter.
- Islam.
- Judaism.
- The Last supper
- Remembrance

Website Resources:

- Bible society website- supportive of staff knowledge.
- Open doors website- 60 years of serving persecuted Christians.
- Bibles Gateway- different versions of Bibles.
- The Trussell foundation- started foodbanks.
- The REND collection- Capital of Christian Music.
- Fischy music – subscription.
- Natre - subscription RE today -subscription Bitesize
- Methodist art collection
- Methodist Schools resources https://www.methodistschools.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-resources
- BBC – my life, my religion

Resources in school

- Funding Matthew's Gospel Contemporary re-telling of Matthew's Gospel (30 copies) Bible storyteller books by Bob Hartman
- Godly play resources and stories.
- A wide variety of Bibles – reflection area.
- Artefacts for Christian and Non-Christian Faiths – reflection area
- The school subscribes to the magazine RE Today – resource booklets for all faiths. Foundation Stage children have a range of resources in their classroom e.g. role play clothes.
- Small world story boxes similar to Godly Play can be very useful in telling stories to children
- A wide range of books for the study of other faiths – RE cupboard British values book
- Big Big questions
- 'Opening up' resource booklets

Worship resources that can be used in RE lessons

- Imaginor: Out of the Box worship for KS1
- Imaginor: Roots & Fruits – creative Collective Worship- access to the www.imaginor.co.uk website.
- Imaginor: Home School Values.

The budget for RE is allocated annually and is linked to the action plan for RE/Collective Worship drawn up by the Exec Head, Head of School, RE Leader and Ethos Committee including the designated RE Governor in liaison with the Foundation Governors based on needs and areas for development identified through monitoring, self-evaluation and any external evaluation.

Visits – Enhancing Provision

Visits to local places of worship and museums are encouraged as a way of bringing RE to life. Visitors who strongly support the ethos of the school are encouraged to come into school to talk to the children e.g. Members of the Circuit and other Methodist Churches, Methodist School's Visitor, other Christian speakers.

The Role of the RE Leader

- To update own knowledge of contents of the subject and developments in the subject to improve the quality of provision
- Disseminate this information to staff along with high expectations for teaching and learning in RE
- Monitor pupil standards in RE
- Monitor the teaching of RE
- Audit INSET needs for the purpose of staff CPD
- Respond to colleagues' requests for support or information
- Provide information for the headteacher about the subject as required
- Organise, share, signpost and store resources
- Audit, update monitor and use resources
- Manage and spend allocation of budget in line with identified areas for development
- Carry out an annual evaluation of the teaching of RE and draw up a relevant action plan based on identified needs and area for development
- Maintain and promote appropriate links
- Attend relevant courses
- Attend meetings of the Ethos Committee and other Governors' meetings where necessary.

Monitoring and Evaluating

RE is monitored and evaluated in line with the School Policy:-

- The Head of School and RE leader monitors the teaching and Learning of RE through lesson observations, book scrutiny and pupil interviews.
- The Head of School and RE leader arranges for staff to bring and share assessed pieces of work in RE throughout the school, which are then discussed, annotated and levelled. These are displayed in a whole school RE moderation portfolio.
- The Ethos Committee and Methodist Schools Visitor act as critical friends and further support and challenge the Head of School, RE Leader and Foundation Governors in providing the best quality RE.

Reporting to LAB

The Head of School/RE leader is responsible for reporting on standards and developments in RE through termly written updates to committees and full LAB meetings.

Right of Withdrawal

'The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England or Methodist Church Foundation. This foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the

conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England or Methodist Church ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and/or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school.'
Where a request is received, the Headteacher may invite parents to discuss the practical arrangements for implementation and to ensure they understand the nature and aims of the school's RE curriculum and collective worship. Parents are not required to provide reasons for their request and the right of withdrawal will be respected.
Parents may request the governing board to provide Religious Education for their children according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. This can only be requested when parents cannot, with reasonable convenience, arrange for their children to attend another school where Religious Education is provided according to the locally Agreed Syllabus. The governing board **should** make provision unless the circumstances make it unreasonable to do so.
Should the governing board be unable to make such arrangements for Religious Education to be delivered according to the Agreed Syllabus, the responsibility for doing so then falls on the Local Authority. The Local Authority may decide that such a request for separate Religious Education is unreasonable and the parental request then fails.
We hope that all parents would feel comfortable with the type of Religious Education being taught at Nutgrove and lessons can often be made to fit with individual beliefs and values.

Policy Review

This policy will next be reviewed in three years, Summer 2028, or sooner when any changes to the curriculum or inspection framework are introduced.

Head of school Mrs Sarah Taylor
RE Leader – Mrs J Dawes
Chair of Governors – Mrs S Picton