

Religious Education (RE)

Policy



Our Curriculum at Finchale

At Finchale Primary School we are proud of our curriculum and the range of experiences we provide for our children. Our curriculum is accessible to all children, irrespective of their ethnic background, gender, disability, religious or linguistic background. We strive to meet the needs of those pupils with additional needs, including special educational needs, those with disabilities, those who are more able, those with gifts or talents and the children who are learning English as an additional language. We provide a rich and challenging curriculum which aims to stretch our children. Staff monitor our children to ensure that they are supported in their learning, whatever their ability.

Statement of Intent for Religious Education (RE)

At Finchale Primary School, we aim to provide a religious education curriculum that engages, inspires and challenges pupils, thus equipping them with the knowledge and understanding to explore the numerous religious traditions, beliefs and practices that are followed in our multi-cultural society. We believe that it is an essential area of study, which ensures children are well prepared for life in a world where there a multitude of viewpoints. We enable the children to make their own informed decisions and to have the confidence to reflect personally and voice their views.

We want our children to enjoy RE and develop resilient responses to misunderstandings, stereotyping and division. We want to offer the children a place where difficult or 'risky' questions can be tackled within a safe but challenging context.

RE nurtures Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and pupils' understanding of diversity. The children discuss 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. A holistic approach to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, British Values, and Community Cohesion focuses on preparing pupils for life in the 21st century.

We aim to provide our children with religious literacy where they will develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religious traditions and world views and explore their responses to life's challenges. This gives pupils the knowledge and skills to flourish both within their own community and as members of a diverse and global society.

Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'G Foster'.

Date: 24.03.2025

Head Teacher:

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'N Ward'.

Date: 24.03.2025

The Importance of Religious Education

Religious Education contributes dynamically to pupils' 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. Pupils learn about religious and non-religious 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. Pupils learn to express their insights and to agree or disagree respectfully. Religious Education offers opportunities for personal reflection and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as it encourages pupils to examine the significance of their learning in relation to themselves and others.

Religious Education enables pupils 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 pupils 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. Religious Education should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diverse religious and non-religious worldviews. Religious Education enables pupils to have a nuanced and informed understanding of political, social and moral issues that they will need to face as they grow up in an increasingly globalised world.

Religious Education also helps pupils deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief and to challenge stereotypes and prejudice. As such, Religious Education is central to good local, national and global citizenship. It makes a significant contribution to the active promotion of mutual respect and tolerance of others' faiths and beliefs, a fundamental British value. It prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

Legal Requirements

The RE curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Durham (revised 2020) and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The Education Act 1996 states that an Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain. It must be non-denominational and must not be designed to convert pupils to a particular religion.

Aims

At Finchale our core curriculum covers those elements set out in the EYFS statutory framework, as well as the programmes of study for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 within the National Curriculum for England. In addition, our teaching goes beyond this to include a range of areas and activities which we believe equip our pupils not only with the skills and knowledge but also the confidence and resilience to be happy, productive members of our society today.

To ensure a smooth transition between what children learn in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, we have carefully structured our planning to ensure there are strong and purposeful links between what children learn and experience in Reception and what they go on to learn and experience in Year 1. This helps to build confidence, maximizes opportunities for learning and demonstrates how our staff have a good understanding of how children progress and develop within each subject.

Our starting point for teaching Religious Education at Finchale is within the EYFS. Here, a key component of Understanding the World, where children make sense of their physical world and community, through their own personal experiences, visits/visitors and stories, to help foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. By the end of EYFS, pupils will be able to know some similarities and differences between different religious

and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.

Our pupils then move on to develop their religious knowledge and understanding, and their ability to think critically and reflect as they study the attainment targets and programmes of study for Religious Education, as set out in the Agreed Syllabus for Durham County Council. This aims to ensure that all pupils:

- ★ develop deepening knowledge and understanding about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews so that they can:
 - describe and explain beliefs and theological concepts
 - 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
- ★ gain and deploy deepening understanding of specialist vocabulary and terms
- ★ know and understand about religious diversity within the region, as well as nationally and globally
- ★ know and understand how religion can be defined and what is meant by the term “religious and non-religious worldviews” and with increasing clarity know that these worldviews are complex, diverse and plural
- ★ 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

What This Means at Finchale Primary

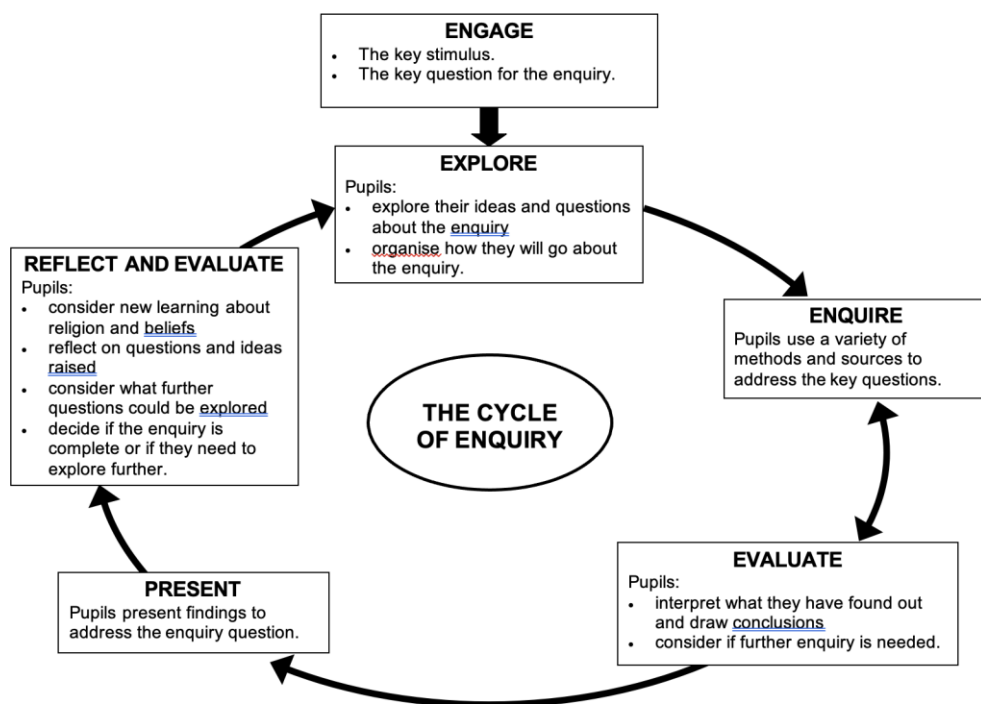
We believe religious education is a practical and engaging subject which motivates and inspires our pupils to gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of the multi-cultural world around them, and which prepares them to be global citizens, through critical thinking and personal reflection.

Religious Education begins within The Early Years, as part of Understanding the World. Our children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to some religious practices, are given opportunities to ask questions, and are given opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and feelings.

In Key Stage 1, children go on to study the key beliefs and practices and their impact for Buddhism and Christianity and are introduced to religious diversity in their local area, including differing denominations.

In Key Stage 2, children study the key beliefs and practices, and the impact of these for individuals and communities for Hinduism and Judaism. They continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs and practices across denominations and the impact of these for individuals and communities. They also learn about the diverse religious and non-religious landscape across our region, including a special study of a local Muslim community. A thematic study is also undertaken (ritual, the environment care for others), looking at the similarities and differences between religious and non-religious worldviews.

Throughout, learning is enquiry led and children are given the opportunity to ask questions, think critically and reflect on their own experiences and feelings.



Teaching Religious Education Should Equip Children To Have:

Self-awareness:

- ★ recognise their own sense of self-worth and value
- ★ develop the capacity to consider their own beliefs, values and attitudes, and feel confident to communicate these to others without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- ★ develop personal, intellectual and moral integrity as they consider their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- ★ acknowledge bias and prejudice in themselves
- ★ become increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas, attitudes and behaviour on others.

Respect:

- ★ recognise that others have a right to have different beliefs and practices to their own
- ★ recognise that people's convictions are often deeply held
- ★ be sensitive to the feelings, ideas, needs and concerns of others
- ★ listen to and learn from others, even when views are different from their own
- ★ value difference and diversity
- ★ discern what is worthy of respect and what is not
- ★ appreciate that some beliefs are not inclusive and consider the issues that this raises for individuals and society.

Open-mindedness:

- ★ learn and gain new understanding
- ★ look beyond surface impressions
- ★ recognise that people hold a wide range of opinions
- ★ listen to the views of others without prejudging their response
- ★ consider evidence and argument, disagreeing reasonably and respectfully, about religious, moral and spiritual questions
- ★ develop the ability to live with uncertainty and ambiguity.

Appreciation and Wonder:

- ★ appreciate the wonder of the world in which we live – its beauty, order, shape, pattern, mystery
- ★ value insight, imagination, curiosity and intuition as ways of perceiving reality
- ★ recognise that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- ★ develop their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose

- ★ develop their imagination and curiosity.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) 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. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

RSHE and citizenship

Through Religious Education, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. 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 multi-cultural society. We also teach and promote British Values through religious education. At Finchale, these are reinforced in the following ways: democracy, the rule of law, individual freedom, mutual respect and tolerance for other faiths and beliefs.

Threads of Learning

We have identified the key concepts or 'threads', that children will repeatedly revisit throughout their time at Finchale. Our threads are: belief, expression of belief, impact of belief and authority. Each unit will not include every 'thread' but over the course of their learning journey through school, children will visit each thread more than once. As children progress through school, they will begin to make links and connections between these threads to support them in developing as critical thinkers/global citizens.

Making Learning Memorable

At Finchale, we aim to make learning memorable through the careful planning and delivery of enriching activities. Children have opportunities to visit places of worship, engage with representatives/teachers of different religions and explore a range of religious artefacts and resources. Children are exposed to a variety of religious and non-religious festivals, throughout the year, through assemblies. Once a month, visitors from our local church come and do a hands-on 'Open the Book' assembly, where they act out a Bible story with Key Stage 1 and 2. Inter-faith weeks, allow the children to gain a deeper understanding of a religion that they may not have studied before.

Withdrawal from RE Learning

At Finchale Primary School, RE is provided for all pupils and is inclusive and broad-minded. Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from R.E. lessons: where parents are wishing to exercise this right, we ask that the parents first meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, we ask that parents confirm the withdrawal of their child from RE lessons in writing. The Headteacher will make arrangements for the child(ren) to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.

Organisation

Religious Education is part of children's learning every week. At Finchale, we follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Durham County Council.

Long term plans and the Progression of Skills, detail the units taught and the sequence of learning through school. Teachers identify their content from these and provide knowledge organisers for each unit of work. The knowledge organisers have a clear knowledge and skill development focus and place importance and priority on developing a child's vocabulary

understanding and use.

The content for each year group, along with long-term plans, can be found on our school website: www.finchale.durham.sch.uk .

Resources

We use a range of resources to support our teaching within religious education which include the following:

- ★ Northeast Religious Learning Resources <https://www.youtube.com/@ReligiousRC/videos>
- ★ NATRE (National Association of Teachers of RE)
- ★ BBC Teach
 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/assemblies-smisc-ks1-ks2-index/zxyf6g8>
 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ks2-religious-studies/z6pbqp3>
 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/ks1-religious-studies/zmtvwtv>
- ★ RE Hubs <https://www.re-hubs.uk>
- ★ RE:Online <https://www.reonline.org.uk>
- ★ Birmingham Faith Visits <https://birmingham-faith-visits.theartssociety.org>
- ★ Visit my Mosque <https://visitmymosque.org/for-re-teachers/>
- ★ True Tube <https://www.truetube.co.uk>

We are continually adapting and amending our resources to meet the needs of our children.

Assessment

Our subject leader for Religious Education will oversee the planning and monitoring of pupils' work.

Throughout a unit we will continually assess children's current knowledge and previous learning using the 'Fast 4'. This retrieval practice is a key aspect of assessment and is carefully placed through school to 'keep learning warm'. Children revisit learning at a distance from taught content to ensure a retention of understanding. At the end of each unit, the key knowledge and understanding will also be assessed by the class teacher usually, through the use of a quiz. These, alongside the 'Fast 4', give a picture of where the children's understanding and knowledge recall sits and provide clear information from which to build further teaching sequences and to extend children's learning.

Teachers also use the Benchmark Expectations from the Agreed Syllabus (age 7, age 9 and age 11) to assess children's knowledge and understanding, and critical thinking skills.

Assessments will be 'high challenge and low threat' and could be undertaken using the following methods (this is not an exhaustive list):

- ★ Fast 4
- ★ Quizzes
- ★ Observation of pupils
- ★ Talking with pupils
- ★ Marking written work
- ★ Self-assessment
- ★ Peer assessment
- ★ Discussion and debates