



Humshaugh C of E (Aided) First School

Religious Education Policy

Date created	January 2026
Date to be reviewed	September 2028
Signed	<i>J.L.Long</i>

Our school Vision - 'To be 'good soil''

Our vision is to be 'good soil' for the children and adults of Humshaugh C of E First School, all based on Jesus' parable of the soils found in Matthew's gospel which you can read below.

Jesus' parable of the soils

'A sower went out to sow and as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil, flourished and brought forth grain.'

Matthew 13.3-8.

This vision of being good soil for our community shapes all we do and helps us understand who we are as a school, why we are here, and then how we live. From it we draw our school values.

1. Who are we as a school: this is our deeply Christian vision which is firmly rooted in the bible.

The parable of the soils, sometimes known as the parable of the sower, is found in three of the New Testament gospels and in the story a farmer sows seed indiscriminately. Some seed falls on the path with no soil, some on rocky ground with little soil, and some on soil which contained thorns. In all these cases, the seed is taken away or fails to produce a crop; but when it falls on good soil it flourishes, yielding a bumper crop.

In Matthew 13 Jesus explains that the seed represents the Gospel and the various soils represent people's responses to it, the first three representing rejection while the last represents acceptance.

We have adopted this parable, and set a school vision and values around us being good soil that enables all children and adults to flourish and grow.

2. Why are we here: these are our values

Our **values** are sowing the seed well, cultivating the soil, preparing the ground and then nurturing in order to enable everyone to flourish. They're drawn from our vision and as a whole school community we say we persevere in:

Sowing the seed well

To place Collective Worship at the centre of the school's daily life.

To prepare children and adults for their place in society as lifelong learners and global citizens.

Cultivating good soil

To provide a high quality and nurturing learning environment.

Nurturing in order to enable everyone to flourish

To be dedicated to continuous improvement, challenging ourselves, celebrating our successes and always aspiring to be "the best we can be".

To enable each child and adult to flourish and achieve.

Producing a bumper crop

To promote our Christian ethos and values through lively, intelligent and creative participation.

To provide an inviting, inclusive school environment where all members of the school community, of all faiths or none, are valued, respected and care for one another.

To encourage and develop links between the school, home, our parishes and the local, national and global community.

To provide a high quality and nurturing learning environment.

To enable adults and children to become courageous advocates for action to care for our environment, our climate and to fight injustice in our world.

3. How then do we live: all of this shapes our school life.

Our distinctly Christian Collective Worship is at the centre of school life and enables children to experience the diversity of Christian practice and tradition. (See Collective Worship Policy)

High quality, effective, academic and non-confessional religious education allows pupils and adults alike to flourish. It teaches them religious literacy in order to be able to hold balanced and informed conversations with people who hold religious and non-religious world views and they are given opportunities to practice these skills through interaction with others on school visits or visitors to school.

Throughout all our school life our Christian vision and values promote social and cultural development through the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation. They encourage good mental health and enable children and adults, whatever their background or ability, to flourish and live well together.

The vision is used to ensure our policies, curriculum and extracurricular opportunities meet the academic and spiritual needs of all learners.

We describe all our activities in terms of how the vision and values inspire our whole school community, children and adults, to engage in social action and to be courageous advocates for change in their local, national and global communities

Our Christian vision supports the character and moral development of all pupils and adults, giving them aspiration for themselves and hope for the communities of which they are a part. It fosters dignity and respect, enabling everyone to be the person God created them to be, to achieve the most they can, and to inspire hope for others in the local community and beyond.

Introduction

Humshaugh Church of England Aided First School is a small rural school which aims to help children learn and grow in the context of a Christian Community. The school is situated in the village of Humshaugh and serves the parishes of Humshaugh and Wall. The school has very close links with the St. Peter's Parish Church and St. George's in Wall and we look forward to the regular visits from our Parish Priest

Many of our pupils come from a Christian background; we feel strongly that they are helped to realise that throughout the world people are motivated by their faith and by the religious culture which surrounds them and so we include the study of other religious and non-religious world views.

The teaching of Religious Education in our school lies at the very heart of the curriculum and strives to be of the highest standard possible. Children learn in RE through different ways of knowing: sometimes using a sociological approach, a theological approach or a philosophical approach, as well as having regular opportunities to express their own ideas. An important aspect of RE They are encouraged to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions of life. It aims to teach children about the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews as well as allowing the children to gain an awareness of their own worldviews. Another important aim is for children to become aware of diversity of practise and belief within any religious worldview. Through reflection on their own beliefs and values the children to grow in respect for themselves and others by deepening their knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Christianity whilst at the same time promoting tolerance and respect for those of other faiths or none.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

The management of Religious Education in our Voluntary Aided School is a distinctive role of the governors and Headteacher. The delivery of RE is in accordance with the Trust Deed and in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England. Although the Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of the Religious Education provided in school, the link governor with overall responsibility is Revd. Sarah Lunn.

Our school curriculum for RE meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act, which stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old.

Religious Education and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another; however, they are managed separately.

The management of Religious Education

- Governors have adopted the Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle Syllabus for RE (Questful RE) which reflects the National Framework for RE, the National Society Statement of Entitlement and the requirements of SIAMS.
- At least 5% of curriculum time is devoted to RE.
- Most teaching is undertaken by Melanie Wilkinson (RE Lead) and supported by class teachers
- Christianity plays a central role in RE, taking up 50% of RE curriculum time.
- Appropriate teaching about other religious and non-religious worldviews takes up the remaining 50% of the RE curriculum including units on a single religious worldview as well as topics which compare beliefs and practice between more than one religious or non-religious world view.

RE Curriculum Planning

- The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. As we have mixed-age classes this is carried out on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus, but do not have to repeat topics. Progression offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.
- Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each half-term.
- The RE teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes.

Religious Education at Humshaugh C of E First School helps pupils to:

- reflect sociologically, theologically and philosophically to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant to Christians today.
- Understand the challenge faced by Christians in today's pluralist and post-modern society
- develop the skills to handle the Bible and other religious texts
- recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world and is a religious worldview is shaped by peoples experiences and beliefs.
- begin to develop their own commitments, beliefs and values
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions

- become active citizens, serving their neighbour
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world
- understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

Approaches to teaching RE

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including discussions, recording, active participation, outside visitors, trips, art, music, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences, to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and to develop their religious thinking.

Where possible we organise visits to places of worship and invite visitors of a variety of faiths to come into school to talk to the children.

Attainment Targets

The Religious Education curriculum maintains a balanced approach between Learning about Religion (Attainment Target 1) and Learning from Religion (Attainment Target 2).

This can be expressed distinctively as:

Learning about Religion

We learn about the Christian belief in a

- God who reveals the truth about himself and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, his action in history and through the prophets.
- God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason.

Learning from Religion

We learn from Christianity

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it
- responding personally to the stories and teachings of Jesus Christ
- examples of Christian living which give priority to the values of unconditional love, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, compassion and faith.

Skills to be developed in Religious Education include:

- curiosity
- investigation
- interpretation
- analysis and evaluation
- synthesis
- application
- expression
- empathy

These skills are cumulative across the key stages.

Attitudes to be encouraged and developed in Religious Education include:

- curiosity and wonder
- commitment
- fairness
- respect
- self-understanding
- awareness of diversity
- open-mindedness
- enquiry

It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world that children should be encouraged to foster a respect for the followers of the other religious and non-religious worldviews. It is essential that this respect is based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of those worldviews

Therefore, RE in our school also helps pupils to:

- learn *about* other religious and non-religious worldviews; their beliefs, traditions and practices *and through encounter with other people on visits or as visitors to school wherever possible* and through the following methods: studying real life case studies asking questions like a sociologist about how people live; looking at texts and asking questions and asking questions like a theologian about what people believe and then thinking critically like a philosopher and asking what questions about what people believe.
- recognise and respect those of all worldviews in their search for God or purpose and meaning in their lives.
- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different worldviews
- enrich and expand their understanding of truths while remaining faithful to their own traditions
- enrich their own lives through examples of holy living in other traditions.

The distinctive Christian content of the Religious Education Curriculum in our school includes:

- opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year

- study of the story of the local Christian community with its saints and martyrs
- visits to places of worship, especially the local parish Church and a Cathedral, to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community
- welcoming visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life
- liaison with the local parish to enable these visits and links to occur
- skills to confidently use religious language to express knowledge and opinions.
- a well-used set of Bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of Bibles and prayer books from a variety of contexts
- the facility to listen to Christian 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions
- access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection

Religious Education in our school should enable:

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

The contribution of RE to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development.

- Spiritual development within RE in our Church School gives opportunities for the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment.
- Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives. The children recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions.
- Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice.
- Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, diverse and multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

The Contribution of RE to ICT

ICT enhances RE, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. Topics are presented using PowerPoint and film clips and sound recordings. iPads are used to record drama work and where appropriate to record visits to places of worship, which can also be viewed through virtual tours on the internet. Different Apps on the iPad can be used in story retelling, role-plays, interviews and hot seating situations.

RE and Inclusion

We teach RE to all children in order to provide a broad and balanced education. We take all reasonable steps to meet the needs of those children with special educational needs, those with disabilities and those with special gifts and talents.

To set suitable learning challenges, account is taken of a range of factors such as classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style and differentiation, so that each child can learn more effectively.

We provide a variety of ways to provide suitable learning opportunities by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child by:

- setting 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)
- grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each ability group
- providing resources of different complexity
- using Teaching Assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Resources

We hold a growing collection of resources and artefacts in school to meet the requirements of the syllabus. This is augmented by the loan of additional materials from other schools in the Federation and by borrowing items from the Diocesan Resources Centre to enrich the teaching of RE at both Key Stages. In addition, there is a set of Bibles for class use, an Understanding Christianity Timeline or Frieze in each class and a collection of religious puppets and persona dolls for use in RE.

Assessment for Learning

- Children demonstrate their ability in RE in a variety of different ways, depending on their age and ability. Children may for example, act out a Bible story or ask and answer questions taking on the role of a particular character. They may contribute to shared discussions in class., create or interpret works of art or suggest comments for speech and thought bubbles. They may draw their

responses, match or sequence pictures to retell stories or respond to questions. Some may use a word bank to help them to recall or spell new vocabulary. They may undertake longer pieces of writing such as writing poems, letters, stories, diaries, newspaper reports or compile case studies or fact files about individuals.

- Teachers will assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them in lessons and by giving verbal or written feedback for written work to help guide progress.
- Quizzes or Spidergrams may be used by children to assess prior learning and end of unit learning outcomes
- At the end of each Unit children are asked to summarise their learning by completing a self-assessment sheet by colouring emojis to say how confident they are about having attained each learning objective for their year group. The teacher also makes the same summary.
- Work is recorded in the children's individual books.
- The subject leader keeps samples of children's work as evidence of levels of attainment.

Reporting

All parents receive an annual written report in the summer term in which there is a summary of their child's progress over the year.

Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, Mrs Melanie Wilkinson, who also:

- keeps informed about current developments in RE and provides a strategic lead and direction for this subject.
- evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in RE and indicates areas for further improvement
- reviews evidence of the children's work and progress.

Parental Rights of Withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School

Parents may request the governing body to provide Religious Education for their children according to the 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 Agreed Syllabus. The governing body will make provision unless the circumstances make it unreasonable to do so.

Should the governing body 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.

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education as they may in any school. However, the Worship and Religious Education provided by this school is in accordance with the Church of England 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 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.

If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Headteacher will explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation. It may be that only some elements of Religious Education or Worship are objected to.

Appendix 1

Guidelines for religious believers visiting schools

Religious visitors taking part in the life of the school should:

- be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights
- avoid criticism of the experience and insights of others
- not impose their views on pupils in any way
- be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies, and plan their involvement in the light of these and the curriculum offered
- seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods which actively involve the pupils
- seek to communicate at appropriate levels for the age group(s) concerned
- make clear to pupils who they are, who they represent, and why they are taking part in the lesson
- be willing to respect and value the faith of pupils when it is different to their own
- develop ways of speaking to pupils which communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to attempt to convert them.

Based on "Code of Conduct for Religious Believers Visiting Schools", PCfRE.

Good practice for visitors coming into school

When arranging for a visitor to come into school, it is good practice to:

- plan jointly, making sure that the visitor is clear and happy about exactly what is required of them and how their contribution fits into the wider curriculum. It is a good idea for the teacher arranging the visit to send a letter confirming date, times, age-group and focus
- pay travel and other expenses - visitors should not be 'out of pocket', although many, especially if they are not coming too great a distance may not accept the offer

- welcome (or arrange for you Headteacher, secretary or classroom assistant to welcome) visitors with simple refreshments, bearing in mind dietary requirements
- have a brief discussion afterwards to evaluate together how the visit went
- send a letter of thanks. It might also be appropriate to involve pupils in writing a thank you, but not if this is a major writing activity for younger pupils and becomes a boring chore which they perceive as following all visits.

Appendix 2

The North East Religious Learning Resources Centre

Complimentary Membership

The Service Level Agreement with the Diocese of Newcastle entitles every Church School to an Individual Membership of the North East Religious Learning Resources Centre, or an equivalent discount on the price of Small or Large Group Membership.

Individual membership entitles a named teacher to:

- Borrow any of the 38 000 resources housed within the two sites (site transfers are available). A maximum of six items may be borrowed at a time for a maximum of eight weeks.
- Attend any Courses, Events and Training presented by the Resources Centre for a reduced fee.
- Receive discounted prices on book orders, if available.
- Receive consultancy on any aspect of their RE resource needs from the Director of the Resources Centre

The North East Religious Learning Resources Centre has a wealth of resources to borrow including books, journals, videos, DVD's, music CD's, posters and artefacts. There are collections of artefacts for each of the six main faiths available to hire at a reasonable charge.

The website is full of useful information including:

- contact details for a variety of local faith groups, places of worship and visitors willing to come into schools
- a range of excellent ideas for using secular film to address religious concepts
- access to a complete catalogue of the resources available within the Resources Centre
- details of courses run at the centre.

The website may be found at:

<http://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk>

The Resources Centre has sites at **Percy Main** and **Durham** and opens from 9.30 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, with regular Saturday morning opening (contact either site for further details).

Church House

St John's Terrace

Percy Main

North Shields

NE29 6HS

Tel: 0191 2704161

Email: enquiry@resourcescentreonline.co.uk

Carter House

Pelaw Leazes Lane

Durham

DH1 1TB

Tel: 0191 3750586

Finding the Resources you need

The Resources Centre has a WebOPAC (online public access catalogue) which enables you to discover what is available, where it is located and whether it is currently available to loan. It also allows members to check their own loans, reservations and fines. The WebOPAC may be accessed through the website

<http://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk>