

# Illuminating Pathways

*'Show me your ways, Lord. Teach me your paths' Psalm 25: 4-5*

A Programme of Study for Key Stage 3

## Religious Education in Church Schools & Academies

*"The drive for excellence and effectiveness in Church Schools is paramount, but not merely because the Government says so. The enabling of every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God, is a sign and expression of the Kingdom and is at the heart of the church's distinctive mission."*  
(Chadwick 2012)

Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education believes that the high quality Religious Education delivered in our Church schools is the key to enabling every child to flourish. We are committed to producing quality resources that will provide our teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to ensure that the children experience the best Religious Education curriculum. Illuminating Pathways is a programme of study for Key Stage 3 linked directly to the DBE Services Framework for Religious Education. This programme of study for Religious Education recognises the potential the subject has, more than any of the other subjects in the curriculum, to have a powerful and lasting effect on the hearts and minds of young people. Religious Education combines academic rigour with the development of the character and spirit of the child. It provides opportunities for spiritual development and personal reflection.

Religious Education develops key skills, knowledge and understanding of the nature of religion and belief, enabling young people to ask thought provoking and challenging questions about meaning and purpose, truth and values, identity and belonging. Religious Education prepares and enables young people to navigate an increasingly complex world, where they seek answers to the 'Big' questions of life in today's diverse society. It enables them to develop sensitivity to, and respect for others. Quality Religious Education breaks down barriers and builds communities. At its best this subject area offers students authentic encounters with living faith communities equipping them with the ability to hold an informed conversation about religious beliefs and practices.

*"Religious Education must have a very high profile within the Church school curriculum and learning activities should provide fully for the needs of all learners. Learners should be inspired by the subject and develop a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world. Attainment should be high and progress significant in developing an understanding of Christianity and a broad range of religions and world views."* Religious Education Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

This programme of study is a revision of 'Illuminating Pathways' the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Religious Education syllabus 2013. Building on the foundation of the programme we have updated and highlighted the implicit theological concepts within the content, bringing it in line with current best practice and pedagogical strategies. By embracing the explicit teaching of Christian concepts and biblical text, it is hoped that the content of this programme of study will give students a deeper understanding of Christianity. Through an open investigative enquiry approach the students will be given the

sense of being on an exciting journey of learning and discovery. A key feature of the programme of study is the large number of questions included in each unit. The purpose of these questions is to give students opportunity to investigate, reflect, evaluate and make meaning. In doing so they will discover more about themselves, their relationships with others, their relationship with the world around them and their relationship with God. Therefore, the teaching of Religious Education is both a huge responsibility and a privilege that must be recognised by those who teach it. In Church schools this quest for discovery takes place within a living and active faith community, where questions about faith and belief should be encouraged. The faith school community naturally guides students to discover answers to their questions. In addition, students need to have experience of a range of mainstream worldwide Christian denominations and other world faiths. Teachers using this programme of study are encouraged to give students as many first hand sensory experiences as possible. Students need to see, hear, touch, taste and smell authentic Christianity and the other world faiths as they study.

In an Anglican school Religious Education is rooted in the message of the Gospel and the living faith of the school. However, it must be made clear that it is not the role of Religious Education to indoctrinate or evangelise. Taught within an environment where Christianity is witnessed and experienced in action, young people will experience, explore and encounter a wide range of creative and challenging activities that will help them to discover the answers to fundamental questions such as these: -

Who am I and what does it mean to be me?  
In what ways do/can I relate to others?  
How/where can I encounter God?  
How can I make a positive contribution to the world in which I live?  
What values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour are important to me?  
What does it mean to have faith?  
Who/what influences and inspires me?

As Church schools the standard of our Religious Education provision should be nothing less than excellent and its impact should be visible in all areas of the curriculum and school life. Religious Education makes a significant contribution to the Christian ethos of the school and should therefore be considered a priority when writing development plans, setting budgets, arranging timetables and staffing.

The units in this programme of study contain learning objectives within a balanced curriculum and have been written in order to meet the required standards and quality of Religious Education in a Church school or academy setting. The programme of study aims to support those teachers who do not have a subject specialism, and also encourages teachers to be sensitive to students' prior learning, educational needs and the school context. The use of the online platform enables teachers to access up-to-date developments. The online platform is also designed to provide supplementary units of study to enable and challenge students. It is also an opportunity for teachers to share their good practice.

*“In Church of England schools the students and their families can expect a Religious Education curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Church schools should provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of*

*the range of faiths and world views studied. Church schools should use some form of enquiry approach that engages with, for example biblical text, and helps develop religious and theological literacy. Links with the Christian values of the school and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are intrinsic to the Religious Education curriculum and should have a significant impact on learners.”* Religious Education Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

The aims of Religious Education in church schools and academies, as informed by the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, are:

- to enable students to encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today;
- to enable students to learn about other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents;
- to develop understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth;
- to contribute to the development of students’ own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs.

DBE Services Framework for Religious Education revised 2018

The outcomes for students at the end of their education in church schools or academies are that all students are religiously literate and, as a minimum, students are able to:

- think theologically and reflect critically on ultimate questions;
- reflect critically on the truth claims within religions and beliefs;
- analyse, interpret and apply sacred texts, particularly the Bible;
- recognise that faith is commitment to a particular way of understanding and responding to God and the world;
- analyse and explain the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community;
- make a well-informed response to Christianity;
- respect those of all religions and beliefs in their search for meaning;
- reflect critically on shared and diverse beliefs and practices

DBE Services Framework for Religious Education revised 2018

In Voluntary Aided Church of England schools the Religious Education offered is to be determined by the governors in accordance with the Trust Deed. Funding agreements stipulate that all academies are required to teach Religious Education. Church of England Academies will teach Religious Education in line with the denominational syllabus.

Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education hope that Governors in all of our schools and academies will choose this recommended syllabus.

The DBE Services Framework for Religious Education also makes the following recommendations to Governing Bodies: -

- a) Religious Education be taught in each year across all key stages;
- b) That the amount of time allocated to Religious Education Key Stages 3 and 4, between 5-10% of curriculum time, be allocated to discrete Religious Education.

- c) In Key Stage 3 approximately two-thirds of Religious Education curriculum time in each year should be spent in the study of Christianity, including the Anglican tradition and significant local Christian communities;
- d) in Key Stage 3 students will study at least two other principal religions; Students should study aspects of the practices and beliefs of the other five major world faiths. (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.) That out of the curriculum time for Religious Education, Christianity should occupy a minimum of 70% of the time, up to a maximum of 80%. Therefore, 20% to 30% of Religious Education Curriculum time should be devoted to non-Christian faiths. The guidance given in this programme of study leads to an 80/20 split.
- e) in Key Stage 4 a continuing study of Christianity is required as part of an accredited course;
- f) in Key Stage 5 students must have the opportunity to study Christianity at AS and A levels; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-the-facts-gcse-and-a-level-reform/get-the-facts-as-and-a-level-reform> in Key Stages 4 and 5 students will study Christianity and at least one other religion.
- g) Guidance is given in the programme of study overviews and units as to appropriate content and length of time for this study.
- h) The Governing Body should nominate a member to be responsible for oversight of the school's Religious Education provision and standards. (Appendix 3 DBE Services Framework for Religious Education)

*“Christianity should be the majority study in Religious Education in every school. In Church schools that should be clearly adhered to. KS 1 – 3 at least 2/3rds of Religious Education curriculum is to be Christianity. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly Religious Education objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of Religious Education. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5%.” Religious Education Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016*

“No other aspect of school life can ensure better than Religious Education that school is experienced by staff and students alike not as a fact factory but as a laboratory for learning the values and virtues, attitudes and aptitudes which make for the wholeness of body, mind and spirit,” (Saxbee 2013)