**Questful RE**

Creative and Challenging 2017

Religious Education in Church Schools   
Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education

*“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 (RE) 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 RE curriculum. Quality RE has the potential, more than any other subject, to have the most powerful and lasting effect on the child’s heart and mind. It is a subject that combines academic rigour with the development of the character and spirit of the child. RE provides opportunities for spiritual development and personal reflection. It develops children’s knowledge and understanding of the nature of religion and belief, it provokes challenging questions about meaning and purpose, truth and values, identity and belonging. RE prepares children for citizenship in today’s diverse society. It enables them to develop sensitivity to, and respect for others. Quality RE breaks down barriers and builds communities. At its best RE offers pupils authentic encounters with living faith communities equipping them with the ability to hold an informed conversation about religious beliefs and practices.

“*RE 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.” RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016*

This RE syllabus is a revision of ‘Questful RE’ the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education RE syllabus 2013. Building on the foundation of both the 2007 and 2013 syllabuses we have updated and redesigned the content, bringing it in line with current best practice and pedagogical strategies. By embracing the explicit teaching of Christian concepts and God’s big salvation story, it is hoped that the content of this syllabus will give pupils a deeper understanding of Christianity. Through an open investigative enquiry approach the pupils will be given the sense of being on a quest of discovery. A key feature of the syllabus is the large number of questions included in each unit. The purpose of these questions is to give pupils 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 RE 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 pupils to discover answers to their questions. In addition, pupils need to have experience of a range of mainstream worldwide Christian denominations and other world faiths. Teachers using this syllabus are encouraged to give pupils as many first hand sensory experiences as possible. Pupils need to see, hear, touch, taste and smell authentic Christianity and the other world faiths as they study.

In an Anglican/Methodist school, RE 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 RE to indoctrinate or evangelise. Taught within an environment where Christianity is witnessed and experienced in action, pupils 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 RE provision should be nothing less than excellent and its impact should be visible in all areas of the curriculum and school life. RE 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.

This syllabus contains a clear Christian emphasis. Many of the learning objectives have been written from the point of view that **“we believe”,** because this is a Church school syllabus and **we do** believe. However, it is recognised that teachers will have to be sensitive to the other faith backgrounds of their pupils.

*“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 RE curriculum and should have a significant impact on learners.”* RE Statement of Entitlement: The Church of England Education Office 2016

The aims of RE **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.

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 are able to:

* give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
* show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views 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.

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

RE should be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools except for those withdrawn by their parents. RE is a component of the basic curriculum to be taught alongside the national curriculum in all maintained schools. For Voluntary Aided Church of England and Methodist schools the RE offered is to be determined by the governors in accordance with the Trust Deed. Funding agreements stipulate that all academies are required to teach RE. Church of England or Methodist Academies will teach RE 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 Diocesan Board of Education also makes the following recommendations to Governing Bodies: -

1. That the amount of time allocated to RE should be at least 5%. This is the minimum recommended in national guidelines. There will be occasions when RE takes a larger slice of the curriculum, reflecting the Church School’s greater commitment to the subject.
2. That out of the curriculum time for RE, Christianity should occupy a minimum of **70%** of the time, up to a maximum of **80%**. Therefore, **20%** to **30%** of RE Curriculum time should be devoted to non-Christian faiths. The guidance given in this syllabus leads to an 80/20 split.
3. That as well as Christianity pupils should study aspects of the practices and beliefs of the other five major world faiths. (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.)  
   Guidance is given in the syllabus overviews and units as to appropriate content and length of time for this study.
4. The Governing Body should nominate a member to be responsible for oversight of the school’s RE provision and standards.

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

“No other aspect of school life can ensure better than RE 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)