SS Simon & Jude
Church of England Primary School

Christian Distinctiveness @ SSSJ








What does Christian Distinctiveness mean?

From the earliest days, the purpose of Church schools was to enable children to flourish by providing a basic education and by developing their moral character. It was always intended that Church schools should be open to all children of the parish. The schools are not 'faith schools' in the sense of presuming that children are practising Christians or attempting to make converts of them. However, the ethos of the schools is based on distinctively Christian values and they will offer children an experience of faith through collective worship and links with the parish church. Religious Education in Church schools will always include teaching about other faiths.

Around the school, there will be signs and symbols which reflect the Christian heritage on which the school is built. There may also be areas for reflection which contain school prayers and prayers that the children have created themselves.

SS Simon and Jude Church of England Primary School offers an education that is distinctively Christian. As a church school we share core values based on the Gospel values. We are a school family where loving God and loving our neighbours, is lived out in the daily life of our school.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promote Christian values through the experience we offer all of our pupils.

SS Simon and Jude CE Primary School Vision, Mission and Christian Values

'I can do all things through him who strengthens me' Philippians 4:13

Why has this Bible quote been selected for our school community?
This resonates with us as a school community as it links to the specific ability to find contentment in whatever circumstance, whether things are going well or not. It is more than the literal meaning that you can achieve what you want in life. It is more about everyone being on a human journey and through this journey it is God that strengthens us to persist and persevere.

Our Vision:

We strive to build a community which nurtures positive relationships that permeate through all aspects of life. A community where barriers do not define us, but instead offer opportunity for growth. No matter our background,

through our faith, we will find the strength and courage to flourish as citizens of the future.

Our Mission:

Empowering individuals to flourish together in the image of God.

Our Christian vision is specific to our school context, and it reflects a Christian understanding of the nature of God and how it underpins and expresses our service to our school community.

We believe that all humankind is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27) and within our school we welcome children from all over the world through our expansion to three form entry, addressing a need within our local community. As a Church of England school, we believe in serving the community based on the love of God for everyone. We celebrate diversity, enabling all to learn and grow alongside others who are different from themselves. We celebrate each person as an individual, promoting inclusivity and developing their talents and qualities which stretches beyond the academic. We enable all to flourish without being limited by their socio-economic background. From their starting points, they travel on an educational journey where their knowledge of the world in which we live grows, developing deep roots that support them to flourish into a future that has yet to be defined.

At SSSJ, we believe that although every person is an individual, they are also part of a community (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Flourishing is dependent on who we are with. We strive to create a sense of belonging where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, where everyone has a voice. Through the development of positive relationships, we live well together: celebrating success and facing challenge as one. We promote forgiveness and restoration over bitterness and division. Individuals are empowered to flourish together through a collaborative culture that focuses upon support and celebration, rather than comparison and competition.

Our school vision embodies the Church of England vision for education, with Jesus' promise of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart.

Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills: enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.
Educating for hope and aspiration: enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely when things go wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.
Educating for community and living well together: a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.
Educating for dignity and respect: the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.

Our Values:



Our vision is lived out through our Christian values, which are largely shared by other world faiths. Our values are at the heart of everything we do in school. They help everyone to develop an understanding of the Christian faith and the teachings of Jesus Christ. A value is a principle that guides our thinking and our behaviour. For each value there is a description of what the values means, the theological background and appropriate biblical links. These values are personal to our community and are the outworking of our vision and mission.

Hope

At SSSJ, we have high hopes and aspirations for our future, our school and community. Hope generates energy and sustains people through difficult times. We also understand that faith gives us hope for both now and for the future, and that this hope brings confidence. Hope for us means that there is always a future whatever situation we are in, because God promised to never leave us, to always love us, and to help us in times of need.

What makes 'hope' a distinctively Christian value?

The Christian understanding of hope illustrates how trivial our everyday use of the word can be. We hope that it will not rain for the picnic, or that the car will start or that the plumber will come tomorrow. However, Christians believe that: God has our best interests at heart; God will never leave us; God will provide for us when we are in need; God knows us and God promises us of a better life to come. When we are in our darkest time, God is there, and will help us. Hope is seen as an essential component of spiritual growth and wellbeing. We are often reminded that God has a specific plan and purpose for each of our lives, and that His plans are always good and full of hope. It encourages us to trust in God and His love, even when we

may not understand what is happening in our lives. We see hope shown in the Christian narrative in many ways. The resurrection gives us hope for eternal life. The gospel stories tell of hope, for example the woman who touched Jesus' robe ("If I just touch his clothes I will be healed."). The rainbow after the flood is a sign that God will be true to his covenant promise.

Scripture

The parable of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11– 32) Jesus shares the parable with his disciples, the Pharisees and others. In the story, a father has two sons. The younger son asks for his portion of inheritance from his father, who grants his son's request. This son, however, is prodigal, thus squandering his fortune and eventually becoming destitute. As consequence, he must now return home empty-handed and intends to beg his father to accept him back as a servant. To the son's surprise, he is not scorned by his father but is welcomed back with celebration and a welcoming party. Envious, the older son refuses to participate in the festivities. The father tells the older son: "you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours, but thy younger brother was lost and now he is found." In the parable, the father (who represents God) never gives up on his wayward son. He is always watching and waiting for him to return. Jesus is teaching that in God's eyes everyone counts as worthy of forgiveness. No matter how challenging life becomes there is always hope and the possibility of a fresh start.



Compassion

At SSSJ, we understand that compassion is about standing in someone else's shoes. As a community, we try to share one another's burdens, encouraging an attitude of empathy and understanding of others. We celebrate the rich diversity in our school and offer a welcome to all those joining our community, especially those in any kind of need.

What makes 'compassion' a distinctively Christian value?

'Compassion' and 'sympathy' have much in common and both are stronger in meaning than simply 'feeling sorry' for someone.

The words have their roots in the idea of 'suffering with' someone, putting yourself in someone else's shoes and experiencing what they experience. This leads to a desire to act, to do something. It is not patronizing. It is about 'doing good' from a position of strength or 'remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'. Compassion requires an act of imagination and humility to share lives with others. Paul links the following qualities together. He says 'clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.' (Colossians 3:12)

Jesus showed compassion towards the harassed and helpless crowds (Matthew 9.36) and his works of healing were always prompted by compassion for people's suffering. Christians have always had to wrestle with the problem of how a loving God could allow there to be evil and suffering in the world. There is no simple answer to this, but we make the first step towards understanding when we grasp the idea that God the Father is not passively observing the suffering of the world from the outside. God fully identified with human suffering in the life and death of Jesus and continues to work to transform the sufferings of the world through the works of the Holy Spirit.

Scripture

The parable of the Good Samaritan is a profound narrative that emphasises the moral imperative of compassion and kindness towards others, regardless of their background or circumstances. It tells the story of a traveller who is beaten and left for dead, only to be ignored by his own countrymen, but aided by a Samaritan, a member of a group traditionally viewed with hostility. This act of mercy, performed by an unlikely helper, serves as a powerful lesson that compassion should not be limited by societal boundaries. The Samaritan's actions exemplify the essence of altruistic behaviour, demonstrating that true neighbourliness knows no bounds and that everyone is deserving of help and empathy. The enduring message of the Good Samaritan challenges individuals to transcend prejudices and to act with unconditional

kindness, thereby fostering a more compassionate society. This narrative has SSSJ to strive towards a more empathetic and inclusive world.



Perseverance

As a school community we value and celebrate perseverance by encouraging one another to take one step at a time to achieve our goals. Sometimes we may feel discouraged, but we foster a culture that recognises that very little that is really worthwhile in life can be achieved without perseverance.

What makes 'perseverance' a distinctively Christian value?

Perseverance is a significant Christian virtue, deeply rooted in the faith's teachings and narratives. It is often associated with steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success. In a Christian context, perseverance is intertwined with faith and patience, reflecting a commitment to God's plan despite challenges or obstacles. This virtue is exemplified in numerous biblical stories, such as the perseverance of Joseph, who endured hardship and remained faithful to God's promises, ultimately rising to a position of power in Egypt. The New Testament also emphasises perseverance, particularly in the Epistle of James, where believers are encouraged to consider trials as joy because the testing of faith produces perseverance. This concept is further highlighted by modern Christian thought leaders who view perseverance as a way to honour God, deepen worship, and build character. It is seen not just as persistence, but as a spiritual discipline that refines an individual's character and faith through the trials of life.

Scripture

The story of Noah's Ark is a powerful narrative that has been passed down through generations, often highlighting the virtues of obedience and perseverance. Noah, the protagonist of the tale, is tasked with an immense challenge: to build an ark that would withstand a catastrophic flood. Despite the mockery and disbelief from those around him, Noah's unwavering commitment to his faith and the task at hand exemplifies perseverance. His story teaches that steadfastness in the face of adversity and dedication to one's convictions can lead to salvation and renewal. This ancient account, found in various traditions, serves as a reminder that perseverance is not just about enduring but also about maintaining integrity and purpose amidst life's trials.



Justice

When we explore our value 'justice', we know it means more than just making things fair. In order for our school community to live in harmony, it is important to have rules and laws that everyone follows. We talk about these rules and the impact that not living by rules could have on our school but ultimately on the wider world. Justice means giving all people what it is right and fair for them to have: life, health, freedom and dignity. It is about acting out of a concern for what is right and seeing right prevail. It is about social justice, especially for those who suffer most and are least able to protect themselves.

What makes 'justice' a distinctively Christian value?

In Exodus, the people are instructed to treat everyone fairly and to do what is right and just (Exodus 23:2) The Bible emphasises that 'The righteous care about justice for the poor' (Proverbs 29:7). Isaiah says: 'Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. (Isiah 1:17) Throughout the Bible, it is emphasised that justice is immensely important to God and is fundamental to God's character. 'For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men will see his face.' (Psalm 11:7) Justice is not about a culture which encourages everyone to insist on their own rights at the expense of others. It is about a community that knows that everyone's well-being is bound up with that of everyone else. Justice is a prerequisite of peace: without justice there can be

no peace. A commitment to justice leads to fierce opposition to injustice in whatever form it may be found.

Scripture

Throughout his whole life, Jesus upheld the rights of the marginalised both in his stories and his miracles: such as the outsider (the Good Samaritan); the outcast (the leper); the unfairly treated (women, children and non-Jews). In the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-45), Jesus equates acting justly for the poor, the weak and vulnerable with loving and serving God. In this parable, Jesus uses the example of a shepherd who separates his sheep from his goats in order to help his followers understand what judgement will be like. Jesus explains that people will be separated into two groups: those who have lived good lives and believed in God will be put on one side and have a place in Heaven and those who have rejected the belief in God and sinned in their lives will be placed on the other side and will go to Hell. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats strongly encourages Christians to take action to help those in need. In this parable, Jesus makes it clear that a life worthy of the reward of Heaven must involve actively helping people in need. Jesus explains that helping a person, whoever they are, is just the same as helping Jesus himself and is therefore a duty for all Christians.



Service

Service is the cornerstone of our thriving school community. It fosters a sense of responsibility, unity, and empathy amongst students and staff alike. By prioritising service, SSSJ cultivates an environment where altruism and personal growth are encouraged, creating a ripple effect that extends beyond the school gates. This value not only enriches the lives of the individuals within the school but also reaches out to the wider community, establishing a strong foundation for civic engagement and social responsibility. In essence, service is not just an activity, but a guiding principle that can inspire and shape the future leaders of our society.

What makes 'service' a distinctively Christian value?

Service is a fundamental Christian value deeply rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the principles outlined in the Bible. It is considered a tangible expression of faith, where the act of serving others is seen as serving God himself. This concept is encapsulated in the biblical passage, "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). In Christianity, service is not merely a good deed or volunteer work; it is a calling to reflect Christ's love and sacrifice. It is about selflessness, humility, and putting the needs of others before one's own, aligning with the Christian commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself. Through service, Christians demonstrate God's grace and compassion to the world, aiming to make a positive impact and bring glory to God. It is through these selfless acts of kindness and compassion that the Christian value of service is most vividly displayed, embodying the essence of Christian teachings and the life of Jesus Christ.

Scripture

The story of the widow's offering, found in Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4, exemplifies the Christian value of service through the act of giving selflessly. In this biblical account, Jesus observes the rich making large donations from their wealth, while a poor widow contributes two small copper coins, which is all she has to live on. Jesus highlights that her modest offering surpasses all others because she gave out of her poverty, not her abundance. This act of service reflects a profound commitment to God, showcasing that true service isn't measured by the magnitude of the gift but by the spirit of generosity and sacrifice. The widow's example teaches that Christian service involves giving wholeheartedly and selflessly, embodying the teachings of Jesus who emphasised service as a form of love and compassion towards others.

By serving with humility and without seeking recognition, Christians are called to follow this example, putting the needs of others before their own and acting out of love and devotion, rather than obligation or for praise.



Respect

At SSSJ, we understand that we are all special, and we celebrate our differences. Respect is a core value within our school as it is the foundation stone of relationships within our community. We learn to value ourselves, each other and the wider community through honesty, tolerance and trust where everyone has equal right to our time and attention.

What makes 'respect' a distinctively Christian value?

Respect is a core Christian value deeply rooted in biblical teachings. The Bible emphasises the importance of respect in various scriptures, highlighting it as a reflection of God's character and the intrinsic worth He places on human life. For instance, 1 Peter 2:17 urges believers to "Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor," illustrating the broad application of respect within Christian conduct. This directive encompasses a universal respect for all people, recognising each individual as a creation in the image of God, deserving of dignity and consideration. Furthermore, the concept of respect aligns with the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Golden Rule stated in Matthew 7:12: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." This principle guides Christians to treat others with the same level of respect and kindness they desire for themselves, fostering a community of harmony and mutual care. Respect, therefore, is not just an admirable quality but a fundamental aspect of Christian ethics, shaping interactions and relationships in a manner that honours both God and humanity.

Scripture

The story of the Roman centurion in the Bible, as recounted in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10, exemplifies the Christian value of respect in several profound ways. The centurion, a high-ranking Roman officer, demonstrates humility and respect for Jesus' authority by acknowledging his own unworthiness and Jesus' power to heal with just a word. His faith and recognition of authority, despite being a man of power himself, show a deep respect not only for Jesus but also for the natural order and hierarchy established by God. This narrative aligns with the Christian teaching that all individuals are created in the image of God and are therefore deserving of respect, as stated in 1 Peter 2:17. The centurion's actions reflect the biblical injunction to show proper respect to everyone, which is rooted in love, humility, and obedience—core virtues in Christian teachings. By valuing his servant's life and seeking help, the centurion also upholds the dignity of every human being, regardless of their social status, which is a direct application of the Christian command to love and respect one's neighbour as oneself.

Worship at SSSJ

At SS Simon and Jude CE Primary School we are committed to offering high quality collective worship. We recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing our school vision and values.

As a Church of England Primary School, we see our Collective Worship as a central part of school life. It is the heartbeat of our school, whereby pupils and adults can encounter faith by

engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together, through meaningful contributions from the whole school community.

Collective Worship in SS Simon and Jude CE Primary School will do the following:

- explore the school's vision and values by connecting the Christian gospel to the everyday lives of pupils and adults, which in turn builds character.
- help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- offer the opportunity to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, worship and reflection.
- enable all members of the whole school community to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship.
- enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

Collective Worship Provision

Worship allows the whole school community to step away from their daily lives in education, to create a space for an encounter with faith in God. The time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community. Worship will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on one idea.

As a Church of England school, the content of our worship is organised to:

- cover each of our school values.
- cover all the major Christian festivals including Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.
- be rooted in Bible teaching.
- use the school prayer, Lord's prayer and other prayers written by pupils and led by the worship group.
- follow an order of service.
- be presented using a variety of styles and to include music, story, drama, enthusiastic singing, reflection and reverence in prayer time.

Worship Yearly Themes

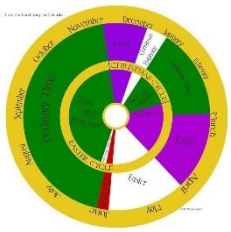
Term	Christian Value Focus	Festivals
Autumn 1	Hope	Harvest
Autumn 2	Compassion	Christmas - Christian Diwali – Hindu Hannukah – Jewish
Spring 1	Perseverance	Lent & Easter – Christian Eid-al-Fitr – Muslim
Spring 2	Justice	Ascension Day – Christians
Summer 1	Service	Pentecost – Christian
Summer 2	Respect	Trinity

Overview of weekly worship

Worship	WORSHIP FOCUS	LED BY
1	**Whole School Collective Worship** *(linked to yearly worship theme)*	Senior Leaders
2	**Class Worship** *(Year 1 to Year 6 linked to whole school worship)*	Class Teacher / Worship Committee
3	**Class Worship** *(Early Years - Jack in the Box)* *(Year 1 to Year 6 Living out our vision and values)*	Class Teacher/ Worship Committee
4	**Music Praise** *(reflecting on songs that link to the Christian Value)*	Senior Leaders
5	**Celebration Worship**	Senior Leaders

Order of Whole School Worship





Worship Table
Runner or cloth to reflect the colour of the season of the Church year
Current value for the term displayed
A Bible to symbolise God the father
A cross to symbolise God's son Jesus
A candle to symbolise the Holy Spirit

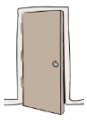
Welcome message
The whole school community read the welcome words together as the candle is lit.
'We have gathered in the name of God the father, Son and Holy Spirit to worship together and think about our value *****'
The key message of the worship (Bible story or passage) is introduced to school community.



LEARN
Teaching of the key message through the use of drama, visual images, storytelling, puppetry or poetry.



REFLECT
The reflecting element encourages everyone to consider how the Bible story or stimulus has resonated with or challenged them. This promotes spirituality as pupils learn how to ask challenging questions and explore deeper meaning.



RESPOND
Responding provides an opportunity to consider how God might be challenging those present in the worship to "step out" and play their part in making a difference in the works either as individuals or as part of the whole school community.

Extinguishing of the candle
The candle is extinguished by the member of the school community leading worship to mark the end of worship.

In Class Worship

As well as whole school worship we also have in class worship. In class worship takes place twice a week and follows the same order as the whole school worship. In class worship will revolve around a single theme per half term and matches the whole school worship, following on and allowing pupils to explore themes in more depth.

The second part of in class worship focuses on the outworking of our Christian vision through using a photograph of pupils expressing what our values 'look like' in our school community, ensuring learning is rooted in the pupils' own experiences. Pupils also develop their knowledge and understanding of what is happening in the world around them through Picture News Collective Worship.

Order of Class Worship



<u>Worship Area for reflection and contemplation</u>
Current value for the term displayed
A Bible to symbolise God the father
A cross to symbolise God's son Jesus
A candle to symbolise the Holy Spirit
School Prayers – Lord's Prayer, Lunchtime Prayer, Going Home Prayer
Reflections completed by the pupils
<u>Welcome message</u>
The whole school community read the welcome words together as the candle is lit.
'We have gathered in the name of God the father, Son and Holy Spirit to worship together and think about our value *****'
The key message of the worship is introduced to school community through an image. The pupils focus on the image and respond to key questions.



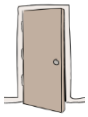


<u>LEARN</u>
Open questions are phrased to facilitate discussion about the Words of Wisdom, which may be a brief text from the Bible or a quote or proverb.





<u>REFLECT</u>
The reflecting element encourages everyone to consider how the Bible story or stimulus has resonated with or challenged them. This promotes spirituality as pupils learn how to ask challenging questions and explore deeper meaning.





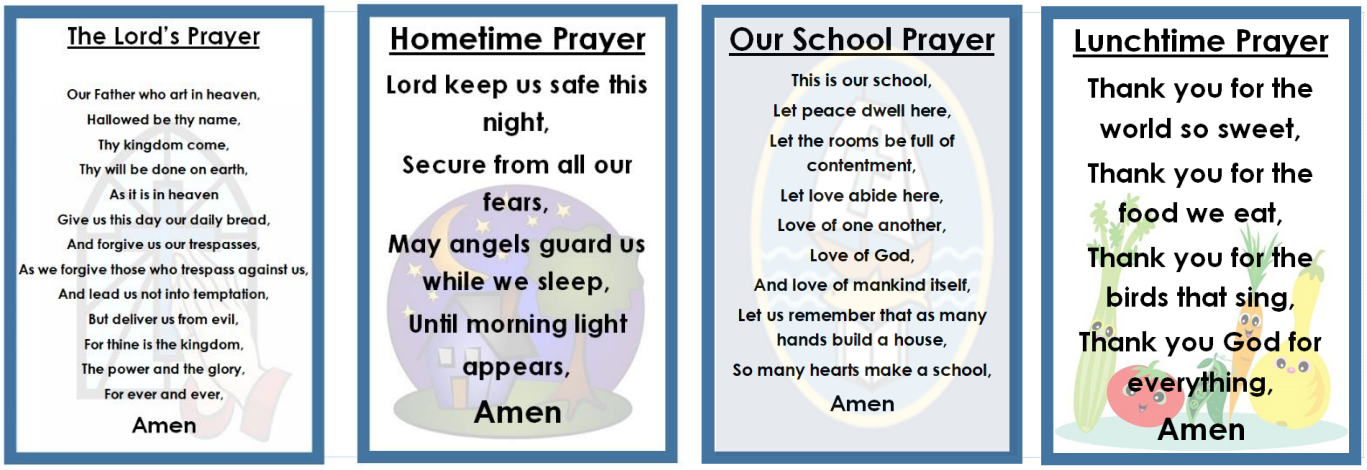
<u>LIVING IT OUT</u>
Responding provides an opportunity to consider how God might be challenging those present in the worship to "step out" and play their part in making a difference in the world either as individuals or as part of the whole school community.

<u>Extinguishing of the candle</u>
The candle is extinguished by the member of the school community leading worship to mark the end of worship.

Daily Prayers

As well as in class worship, we also have daily prayers that are said in class. These prayers are led by the class teacher and the members of the worship committee.

These prayers include:



Worship Committee

The Worship Committee is made up of pupils from each year group who have applied for the position. They meet fortnightly with the Principal and/or Worship leaders. The role of the Worship Committee is to support school with whole school worship and in class worship, providing feedback and monitoring delivery. Worship group pupils are expected to contribute to special worship events e.g. Harvest, Christmas, Easter, etc.

Spirituality

Pupils and adults are encouraged to explore deeper meanings and see beyond their known world during whole school and class worships. Questions and a moment to pause and reflect are built into the worship structure to support pupils and adults in their spiritual journey.

Within our curriculum, pupils are given regular opportunities to experience awe and wonder, e.g. through exciting and engaging entry points, as well as chances to question their existing beliefs and values e.g. when studying invaders i.e. why people acted as they did.

Time to pray, be quiet and relax also enable pupils' and adults' spiritual growth.

Further information can be found in the school's 'Promoting Spirituality' document.

Parental Involvement

Our weekly newsletter, which is sent out to all parents and is available on our school website, contains information on the focus for worship that week, linked to our half termly value.

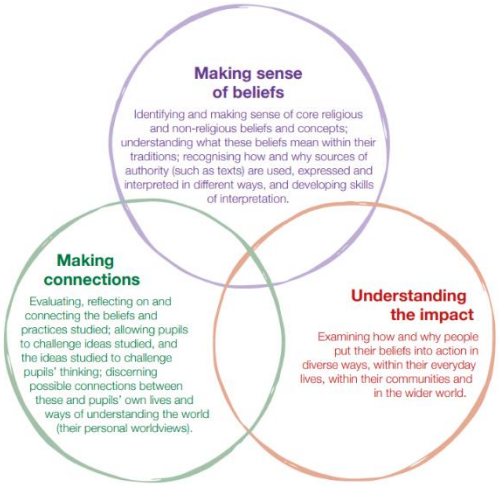
At the beginning of every half term, we send home the Home School Values sheet for parents. This sheet has ideas, stories and activities based around the Bible linked to the value we are focusing on for that half term. This sheet will also be displayed on the school website.





Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

As a church school R.E has as much importance in the school curriculum as English and Maths. R.E is taught as a discrete subject in every class from Early Years to Year 6. SS Simon and Jude CE Primary School follows the Manchester Diocese RE Syllabus 2023.



The syllabus is designed to support schools in deepening the pupils' knowledge about religions through studying one religion at a time and by including thematic units, pupils build on learning by comparing the religions, beliefs and practices studied.

The teaching and learning approach has three core elements which are integrated together to provide breath and balance when teaching about religions and beliefs. The three core elements detailed below is taken from the Manchester Diocese RE Syllabus 2023. Further information linked to the teaching of Religious Education can be found in our curriculum area of the school website.

Marking and feedback

Marking and feedback given to pupils must be to the same quality as we would see in English or Maths books. Work should be marked to the learning objective and opportunities should be given to pupils to reflect on their learning. Pupils should respond to this in purple pen.

R.E Displays

Every class in school must have an R.E display either inside or outside of the classroom. R.E displays in school should be topic based. These displays should be used as a working wall, where work gets added to the display regularly. The display should be interactive with key questions for pupils to think about.

Assessment in Religious Education

Assessment in the agreed Manchester Diocese syllabus is related to end of phase expectations which are at age 7 and 11. Pupils should show that they know, understand and apply the concepts, skills and processes specified in the programmes of study. The agreed syllabus offers a mid-way marker for the end of Year 4, age 9.

The units detailed within the long-term plan have clear learning outcomes. These learning outcomes for each unit are expressed in relation to the three elements of the teaching and learning approach (making sense of beliefs, understanding the impact, making connections). The learning outcomes directly relate to the end of phase outcomes and support teachers in determining whether pupils are on track to meet the end of phase and end of key stage expectations.

As part of the planning process staff refer to these learning outcomes in order to plan learning activities that enable the pupils to build up knowledge and understanding, in a variety of ways, allowing pupils plenty of opportunities to achieve the outcomes. The learning outcomes are broken down into 'I can' statements by teachers when planning lessons. Throughout the unit, teachers are aware of how far pupils achieve the outcomes, so as to guide their next steps.

More information linked to assessment in Religious Education can be found in the assessment overview.