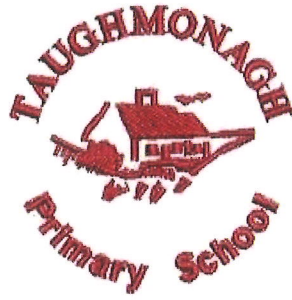




## Religious Education Policy

Ratified: October 2024

To be Reviewed: October 2026



## Draft Religious Education Policy



Written June 2024

Date ratified by BoG: October 2024

Date of next policy review: October 2026

**Motto:** Learning Without Limits

*Our Mission is to:*

- Respond to children in a holistic way embracing emotional and academic success.
- Provide a safe environment where children can flourish and will value experiences as a learning opportunity.
- Fully utilise and maximise the skills and talents of the staff, children and parents to provide a rich learning environment.
- Create opportunities for community and parents to develop partnerships to enable participation in learning and decision making.
- Give children the development in skills and resilience to ensure the best possible future for themselves and within society.

**Vision:**

Taughmonagh Primary School envisions a safe and nurturing environment where every child feels valued and included. We are forward-thinking, inspiring young minds to embrace change and diversity. We strive to create a community that celebrates differences and fosters a love for learning in every child. We aspire for children to have the enjoyment for learning and to achieve their utmost academic and social development throughout their education.

**Ethos:**

Our school is a warm, welcoming, nurturing, and safe place for the whole community. We will endeavour to provide a stimulating environment to support children of all abilities. We will celebrate their success and achievement and promote resilience and value all learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Taughmonagh Primary School is an inclusive school, committed to the provision of a safe, happy and stimulating learning environment in which everyone feels safe, secure and valued. Our school is a place where all of our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential and all success is celebrated. This policy reflects the ethos of our school and aims to set out the whole school approach to the teaching of RE in Taughmonagh Primary School.

Religious Education (RE) is a statutory component of the Northern Ireland Curriculum which focuses on encouraging children to become informed and inquisitive about their own and others' religious beliefs and practices.

This policy has been written in line with Department of Education N.I. requirements; namely the Core Syllabus for Religious Education (2007) which at Key Stages 1 and 2 includes the Revelation of God, the Christian Church and Morality, alongside the non-statutory guidance materials which were published in 2014.

The Principal, Staff and Board of Governors of Taughmonagh Primary School accept their responsibility to provide a broad and balanced Religious Education curriculum and recognise their statutory duty to comply with the Core Syllabus, in keeping with our school ethos.

After ratification by the Board of Governors, this policy will be monitored and updated periodically, in light of new guidance/legislation and feedback from pupils, staff and parents.

A copy of this policy will be made available for downloading on the school website.

We understand that RE is not compulsory and as per the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, parents/carers may choose to withdraw their pupils from religious activities. We respect the needs and wishes of parents/carers who choose to do this. This may be done by written request to the principal.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairman BoG)                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

## STATEMENT

Taughmonagh Primary School is a Rights Respecting School which means that everyone puts the rights of the child at the heart of the school. Our rights are based on the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. All children everywhere are born with these rights which cannot be taken away.

Article 2: All children have these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what their parents do, what language they speak, what their religion is, whether they are a boy or girl, what their culture is, whether they have a disability, whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

When developing a policy for delivering the R.E. Curriculum we keep these rights at the centre of our teaching, ensuring that children are aware of the need to respect everyone. We ensure children have the opportunity to learn about their own religion, as well as developing an understanding and respect for what other people believe.

Article 14 You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs.

Article 30 You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose.

At Taughmonagh Primary School we are committed to providing appropriate religious education for all of our pupils. It is our aim to help pupils understand that diversity exists on a global scale, as well as a local scale. We endeavour to encourage pupils to appreciate the many different beliefs and help them develop an understanding of these beliefs.

## RATIONALE

"Research (Connolly et al., 2002) has shown that pre-school pupils are aware of difference and that if this is not dealt with by positive interventions it can lead to a hardening of negative attitudes as pupils grow older. In Northern Ireland, where many pupils from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds still attend largely or wholly separate schools, it will be especially important for primary RE to help them begin to grow towards a mature awareness of their similarities and differences."

(CCEA 2007 'Religious Education in the Primary School - Non-Statutory Guidance Materials')

Religion is omnipresent in society and of paramount importance to many individuals living in Northern Ireland. According to the 2011 Northern Ireland Census, 41% of individuals identified as 'Catholic', 42% identified as 'Protestant and Other Christian' and 0.8% of individuals stated they were of a non-Christian religious affiliation, making up 84.8% of the population: <http://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/public/census2011analysis/religion/religioncommentary.pdf>

Furthermore, religion is an aspect of life and human experience. In Northern Ireland, some pupils are members of religious communities and are brought up by their families to learn and practice a particular faith and may be actively involved within their place of worship. Others are aware of places of worship in their locality or may have heard about them in the media, on the internet, or on holiday. Pupils may attend events such as weddings, funerals or festivals in religious places of worship. Many stories, novels, songs, films, paintings and theatre performances include references to religious places or ideas.

Consequently, pupils may develop a natural curiosity about these experiences. RE should help pupils to explore these aspects of life and to investigate how they relate to other parts of human experience.

It is important to highlight that the teaching of RE at Taughmonagh Primary School endeavours to educate pupils and does not seek to instruct or indoctrinate.

## DEFINITION

RE in the primary school is defined by the Department of Education and the four main Christian Churches in Northern Ireland. It can be summarised as being about developing children's awareness and understanding of religion. It focuses on encouraging each child to become informed and inquisitive about their own religious beliefs and practices and those of others. This is so that, over time, they will grow as citizens of a religiously and culturally diverse local and global society, aware of similarities and respectful of differences.

An awareness and understanding of religion should help children to:

- make sense of the world around them
- think about universal human questions
- begin to shape their own attitudes and values
- be aware of and respect the different views of others
- understand the important routines of life for many people, such as worship, prayer and seasonal festivals
- be aware of how people mark important stages of life such as birth, growing up into adulthood and death
- develop an understanding of how moral choices are made.

At Taughmonagh Primary we believe that Religious Education should contribute to the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children and equip them with the necessary skills, capabilities, attitudes and knowledge which they will need for life and work in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, so that they may participate and contribute positively to their society; building understanding, respect and tolerance towards all the different people that they may encounter in their lives.

## CONTEXT / GENERAL AIM

At Taughmonagh Primary we recognise that our young people live in a society with a diverse range of cultures, religions, family types and morals. We recognise each of our pupils as an individual, with the right to be treated with respect and dignity, regardless of their class, sexuality, culture, religion or gender.

The values we uphold at Taughmonagh Primary School are based on Christian principles which include honesty, respect for self and others and we welcome children of all faiths and none.

RE will be presented in a challenging manner and in a non-denominational approach, allowing the children to consider the evidence both freely and critically. To ensure the relevance of RE, teaching will draw frequently on the pupils' own experiences and where possible and be illustrated by stories from the lives of famous Christians. Using a variety of teaching methods our aim is to instil into pupils a sense of curiosity and interest in the world around us. While our teaching and learning Programme is predominately based on Christianity, other world religions are also introduced and incorporated.

We will provide pupils with opportunities to learn about, discuss and evaluate the common elements of the Christian traditions and the differences between them and other major faiths. Our pupils will have opportunities to explore one another's faiths, including visits to local churches and other community venues. Children from the Roman Catholic faith are prepared for their sacraments, and classmates learn about significant world religious celebrations (Divali, Ramadan, Chinese New Year) as they happen throughout the year. Our whole school participates in other celebrations, such as Harvest, Remembrance Day, Christmas and Easter.

As the children move through the school, they begin by learning about different religions and places of worship and festivals. They begin to recognise that religious teachings and ideas can make a difference to individuals and families. They reflect on how spiritual and moral values relate to their own behaviour. Children read religious stories to support this, in addition to using drama, art and role play. As the children move through the school, children deepen their knowledge of religions and progress by linking this to their own lives. They are asked to consider how religions can support pupils when reflecting upon ideas of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to

them. Children are also encouraged to discuss their own and others' views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas.

Throughout RE at Taughmonagh Primary we will seek to:

- Recognize and appreciate the religious and spiritual dimensions of life, helping them to consider questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human;
- Understand the role of religious belief and practice in the 21st century;
- Give pupils the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and values;
- Respect the beliefs, values, morals and attitudes that shape their lives,
- Develop a positive understanding of Christianity, realising the importance of the Christian values system that has shaped our society for many centuries and learn about some of the most famous stories found in the Bible
- Develop an awareness of their responsibilities at home, at school and in the wide community.
- Help our pupils understand, respect and relate to others, particularly those whose denomination, faith and beliefs are different from their own, thus addressing sectarianism, racism and prejudice;

## CONTENT

The Programme of Study for R.E. follows the Statutory Requirements set out in the Core Syllabus which was revised in 2007.

The Attainment Targets are as follows:-

AT1: The Revelation of God

AT2: The Christian Church

AT3: Morality

The Core themes are:

### 1. THE BIBLE

Pupils should have opportunities to learn Bible stories and respond to these in a variety of ways. They should become aware that the Bible contains many different kinds of literature including law, history, poetry and prophecy. In their appreciation of Bible events, they should also begin to understand the basic chronology of the Bible.

### 2. JESUS

Pupils should become familiar with the character of Jesus, with what he taught and did, and why he is so important to Christians. They should also begin to learn why many of his teachings are valued and respected by people of other faiths.

### 3. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Pupils should learn about church buildings, what they are for, what happens in them and what they mean to Christians. Where possible they should become comfortable with church buildings and appreciate the elements of church services. They should also learn that the word 'church' refers to the caring family of God.

### 4. FESTIVALS

Pupils should begin to grasp the annual pattern of Christian festivals and their purpose in keeping the life of Christ and the work of God constantly before the church. They should begin to associate Christian festivals with words, music and art, and they should be helped to explore the meaning of these. They should

continue to be given opportunities to understand and to take part in Christian festivals.

## 5. THE NATURAL WORLD

Pupils should explore the themes related to appreciation of the natural world, and in particular the ideas of creation and creativity. They should begin to understand that people of different faiths believe that caring for the natural world is important and that human beings have particular responsibilities. They should have opportunities to explore this in a practical way in the school environment.

## 6. SACRAMENTS

Roman Catholic children are prepared for the Sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation by staff from Harberton School.

## WORLD RELIGIONS / FESTIVALS

The teaching of these Attainment Targets follows the Programme of Study set out by the BELB. In keeping with the flexibility of the curriculum each class includes work in additional areas including World Religions and Religious Festivals.

P1: Eid

P2: Chinese New year

P 3 - Buddhism

P4 - Hinduism (Divali) and Ramadan (Islam)

P5 - Islam

P6 - Judaism

P7 - an introduction to the 6 main world religions followed by an in depth study of Christianity, Judasim, Islam and Hinduism.

## WORSHIP

- We have regular whole school assemblies where staff, pupils and representatives from the local Christian churches/organisations take part. The assemblies are also an opportunity for the school to celebrate the achievements of its pupils and to recognise important events in their lives such as birthdays.
- Our Foundation Stage perform an annual Nativity at Christmas for the whole school community and invited guests
- Our senior school participates in a carol service at a local church and they sing in local care homes/the community at Christmas.
- Every year there is a Harvest Assembly for the whole school and local clergy / local Food Bank representatives are invited to take part.
- All classes cover the following Christian topics, Harvest, Christmas, St Patrick's Day, Easter.
- Our Roman Catholic children are supported in preparation for their sacraments by Harberton School.
- Charity representatives are invited in for school assemblies.
- Primary 6 - 7 participate in the Interactive Life Exhibition held in Bethany Church every two years.
- The school supports those pupils whose faith requires a special diet.
- Pupils can opt out of Christian worship, if requested in writing by their parents/guardians

## STAFF

- All staff will model respect for others and all faiths in every aspect of school life.
- All staff will use the inclusive language of 'Christians' 'Jews', 'Muslims' etc when discussing any faith.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

A variety of teaching methods will be deployed to suit the purposes of each learning objective.

We encourage learning through investigation, based on first-hand experience. We also use powerpoints and video clips from the internet, religious stories and sacred texts, outside visits and teacher led discussions. Pupils may also take part in drama and role play and work individually, in pairs, in groups or as a whole class. Work may be displayed through artwork on classroom/corridor boards.

## CROSS CURRICULAR LINKS

Taughmonagh Primary School understands the importance and value of cross-curricular experiences for its pupils. Where possible, the staff will identify opportunities in RE for the teaching and reinforcing of concepts in other subjects. Examples of cross-curricular links in RE include, but are not limited to:

### Language and Literacy

- Talking and Listening - listening to a Bible story and re-telling it orally. Understanding the moral behind a parable. Hot Seating and Conscience Alley talking and listening activities.

Writing - Creating a fact file about a religious figure. Writing a recount of a bible stories, Diary entries,

Reading - Reading stories from the Bible; prediction, comprehension and sequencing of Biblical stories.

### Mathematics and Numeracy

- Understanding of time - Old Testament comes before New Testament. Numbers used in the Bible, days of creation, times, calendar, Church calendar and timescales. Listening to the Story of Noah's Ark and counting in twos/pairs. Looking for patterns in stained glass windows, symmetry in church buildings

### ICT

- Use of MS PowerPoint /Slides / google slides to create a presentation about a religious figure or story; Use of Book Creator iPad app to retell a Biblical story; Creating videos using Clips iPad app to act out a scene from a Biblical story. Use of Google Maps to locate key places of religious importance.

### The World Around Us

- Appreciation of the diversity of creation, appreciation of all living things and respect for the environment.

STEM activities to support teaching of Biblical stories. The historical role of Jesus; Timelines. Chronological order - BC and AD; Churches now and then. Mapping Abraham's journey from Haran to Canaan. Identify the places of Christ's teaching and preaching and other cultures' buildings and architecture.

## Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

- Having respect for oneself and others; Recognising the value of cooperation; examine attitude and behaviour towards other people; Understanding of minority groups and experience of worship and prayer in various churches.

### The Arts

- Art & Design - Illustrating Biblical stories; Materials and clothes from Biblical times; Collage work and puppetry and picture sand religious works of art.
- Drama - Dramatizing Biblical stories and everyday situations for moral choices;
- Music - songs, carols and sacred music through the ages. Music used to retell Bible stories. Carol Services at Christmas time, assemblies

## Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)

PDMU has much in common with religious education as it focuses attention on the children's emotional development, health and safety, relationships with others and development of moral thinking, values and actions. Both areas of study encourage each child to; become aware of their own unique existence, to become personally, emotionally, socially, and physically effective; to lead healthy, safe and fulfilled lives; and to become confident, independent and responsible citizens, making informed and responsible choices and decisions throughout their lives.

## DIFFERENTIATION AND PROGRESSION

Differentiation will be by task, outcome and support. The scheme allows for differentiation by including extension, support and re-enforcement activities.

## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Pupils with special needs follow the curriculum at an appropriate level and activities should be adapted, extended or re-enforced for pupils as required. Provision for S.E.N. children must conform to the principals of the Agreed Syllabus. However, class teachers should exercise their own judgement in modifying the syllabus to match the ability of each child.

## RESOURCES

Resources for RE are reviewed, renewed and developed each year from money delegated from the school's budget. Class teachers are required to inform the R.E. co-ordinator of any resources needed to be included in the next requisition. Equipment to support schemes of work may be requested by any member of staff.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Board of Governors has responsibility for the oversight of Religious Education in the school.
- Oversight of R.E. includes consideration of its status and its needs in each review of the School Development Plan.
- Ms R Graham is the member of staff responsible for the co-ordination of R.E. in the school.
- A member of the Board of Governors will link with the Principal and R.E. Coordinator regarding the status of R.E. and provision for it in the school.
- Appropriate steps will be taken to inform and secure the support of parents/guardians regarding the R.E. programme.

## STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Although all staff have a responsibility to teach religious education within their year group, the following staff have specific responsibilities: -

- Ms Graham - RE Co-ordinator
- Mrs A Wilson, Mrs L Wilson & Mrs R Graham to contribute to whole school assemblies -
- Mrs A Wilson organizes a rota for clergy and other visitors to lead assemblies.
- Mrs. Roberts and Ms Graham - liaise with Harberton staff re preparation of Year 4 and Year 7 pupils for the Sacraments of First Confession and First Holy Communion.

### Online links to CCEA RE syllabus

CCEA Core syllabus for Religious Education

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/religious-education-core-syllabus>

CCEA non statutory guidance materials

<https://ccea.org.uk/learning-resources/religious-education-primary-school-non-statutory-guidance-materials>

Draft overview table of RE at Taughmonagh Primary School

Class	Sept - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - May
<b>Nursery</b>	The nursery use festivals which occur throughout the natural school year to discuss and learn about special celebrations relating to them. These include, birthdays, harvest, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Divali, St Patrick's Day, Eid, Ramadan, Easter.		
<b>P1</b>	<p><b>The Creation Story:</b> -            God makes the world            God makes animals            The first man and woman            God's world is spoiled            How we can look after our world)  <b>Harvest</b>  <b>Christmas</b> - Happy birthday Jesus</p>	<p><b>Miracles:-</b>            The great escape - Moses and Red Sea            Joshua &amp; the battle of Jericho            Namaan            Miracles of Jesus:            What's for lunch? The feeding of 5000            I can see - blind Bartimaeus            Through the roof - 4 friends help            Storm at sea - Jesus calms the storm            Saying sorry - ten lepers  <b>St Patrick's Day</b>  <b>Easter</b></p>	A look at Eid
<b>P2</b>	<p><b>Promises</b>            A special boat - The story of Noah            Abraham &amp; Sarah - a promised son            Hannah - dedicated baby            Daniel - protection in the lions den -            David &amp; Goliath a promised king  <b>Harvest</b>  <b>Christmas</b> - a very special baby (Mary &amp; Gabriel, Elizabeth &amp; Mary)</p>	<p><b>Chinese New Year</b>  <b>St Patrick's Day</b>  <b>Easter</b></p>	<p><b>Good and bad Choices</b>            Cain and Abel            Jacob &amp; Esau            Abraham &amp; Isaac - the sacrificial son            Samson and Delilah            Jonah,            Solomon            Esther</p>
<b>P3</b>	<p><b>Parables</b> (stories Jesus told)            Lost sheep            Lost coin            Hidden treasure / pearl of greatest price            Unforgiving servant            Wise and foolish builders</p>	<p><b>St Patrick's Day</b>  <b>Helen Cadbury</b> (chocolate &amp; pocket bibles)  <b>Easter</b></p>	A look at Buddhism

	<p>Forgiving others - the prodigal son</p> <p>Helping others - the good Samaritan</p> <p>Leading into The Christian church - the call of the disciples</p> <p><b>Harvest</b></p> <p><b>Christmas</b> - the best present ever (journey to Bethlehem, birth &amp; visitors)</p>		
<b>P4</b>	<p><b>Harvest</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Story</b> / Hindu religion <b>Divali</b> - the festival of lights</p>	<p><b>St Patrick's Day</b></p> <p><b>Easter</b></p> <p><b>Ramadan/Eid</b></p> <p><b>Corrie Ten Boom</b></p>	<p><b>The Bible</b> - God's story book.</p> <p><b>Mary Jones</b> &amp; her bible</p>
<b>P5</b>	<p><b>God's Rules</b></p> <p>(including the story of <b>Moses</b>; baby in the bulrushes, fleeing &amp; burning bush, the plagues, crossing the Red Sea and the ten commandments)</p> <p><b>Eric Liddell</b> - keeping the rules</p> <p><b>Harvest</b></p> <p><b>The first Christmas</b> - from rags to riches (census &amp; birth, escape to Egypt)</p>	<p>The story of <b>Joseph</b> and our relationships with others</p> <p>(Dreamer, hated brother, faithful prisoner, new leader)</p> <p><b>St Patrick's Day</b></p> <p><b>Easter</b></p> <p>A look at <b>Islam</b></p>	<p><b>Amy Carmichael</b> from Millisle to India</p>
<b>P6</b>	<p><b>Prayer</b> - the Lord's Prayer</p> <p><b>Harvest</b> - the story of Ruth</p> <p>The transformation of <b>Saul to Paul</b></p> <p>Life at the first <b>Christmas</b> - Herod's wicked plan - to a loving family</p>	<p><b>St Patrick's Day</b> - the good news comes to Ireland</p> <p><b>Easter</b></p> <p>A look at <b>Judaism</b></p>	<p><b>Brother Andrew</b> or <b>Jim Elliot</b></p>
<b>P7</b>	<p><b>An introduction to the 6 main world religions.</b></p> <p><b>Harvest</b></p> <p><b>Christmas</b> - then and now - a promise kept</p>	<p><b>St Patrick's Day</b></p> <p><b>Easter</b></p> <p><b>Christianity &amp; Judaism</b></p>	<p><b>Islam and Hinduism</b></p>

