



St Mary's and St Peter's C of E School

Religious Education Policy

We believe high standards of care and love are an integral part in the quality of teaching and learning across the whole curriculum. Our school Christian vision of **'life in all its fullness'** is at the heart of our school and we believe that all within our community should be able to flourish and achieve their full potential.

This policy, along with all our policies and practices, has been written with our vision of *life in all its fullness* for the children, staff, and wider community in mind, and to support us in realising that vision.

This policy reflects the core values of the school: wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

Introduction

*Religious Education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10).
It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together.
Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to
our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and
worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.
(Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)*

This policy is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education and the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education.

Our School Vision

At St Mary's and St Peter's Church of England Primary School we provide a vision which is deeply Christian, whilst at the same time serving the common good within our community. The words of Jesus in John 10:10 promising **'life in all its fullness'** are firmly embedded in our teaching of RE.

Our RE scheme of work provides many opportunities to realise the four key areas of our vision:

Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
Hope and Aspiration
Community and Living Well Together
Dignity and Respect

Our vision is expressed through four values: wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

We value wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

As a church school, RE has a high profile in our school. Our RE curriculum enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice; this includes the ways in which it is unique and diverse.

We have high expectations of all our pupils and deliver a curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling children to become religiously literate within an inclusive and safe space that promotes critical thinking and celebrates and respects difference.

Our RE curriculum contributes to British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All our RE teaching is underpinned by the principles of inclusion, equal opportunities and race equality.

What is RE?

RE is a core academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas. RE is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum.

Aims and objectives of RE

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Statutory Duties

Religious Education at St. Mary's and St Peter's primary school is agreed by the governors and reflects the trust deeds of the school. We adhere to the guidelines set out in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or parts of Religious education. Children who are withdrawn from Religious Education will be supervised in another class. However, in view of the distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. Any parents who request withdrawal should do so in writing and a meeting to discuss this request will be arranged with the Headteacher.

How we teach RE

The school uses the LDBS scheme of work for RE. It spans from Reception to Year 6 and covers the six main world religions and a number of thematic units for Upper Juniors. The content of the curriculum is in the main part Christianity.

10% of curriculum time is dedicated to the delivery of RE. This is separate to the children's entitlement for collective worship. Teachers have flexibility in the way they allocate these hours although it is expected that there will be an hour of RE taught each week.

In addition to the weekly RE lessons, a number of 'Pause days' are planned in for the year. These are opportunities for the whole school to reflect on a particular topic for the day. These creative and thought provoking days provide opportunities to explore a key theme (e.g. Harvest and Easter) through art, drama and other practical ways.

The intent of the LDBS syllabus:

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – vision for Education (Church of England)
- To offer a systematic enquiry- based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
 - *Ability to be critical thinkers*
 - *Ability to engage critically with texts*
 - *Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions*
 - *Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews*
 - *Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions*
 - *Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.*

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content.
- Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.
- Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own.

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- The Christian vision of the school.
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement.
- The Church of England's vision for Education – every person deserves to live a 'life in all its fullness.'

Implementation of the LDBS syllabus:

Enquiry Based Learning

Within every unit of learning, the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

Enquire: The initial stage of the enquiry involves engaging with the big question for the unit and a subsidiary question for the lesson. For example:

Big question: What does it mean to be a Hindu?

Subsidiary question: What is Karma and how does it affect the life of a Hindu?

All questions are rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, philosophy or human/social science.

Investigate/explore: The 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where children primarily learn about religion and belief. They consider the religious content and context being explored. These are some of the strategies that are used to 'deepen' the children's learning:

- Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
- Using challenging and controversial questions
- Extended pieces of writing
- Discussion which continually asks 'Have we gone deep enough yet?'
- Children engaging with authentic religious believers (face to face, video etc.)
- Exploring complex theological concepts, questions and issues
- Investigative work using religious artefacts, library books and the internet
- Opportunities for the children to respond practically through use of art and drama

Evaluate/communicate: The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children use skills of analysis and evaluation to answer questions such as: *What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/practice make on the religious community?*

Reflect on/express: The reflection part of the lesson gives children time to individually respond to the learning. They will consider questions such as: *What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response?*

Skills Progression in RE

Early Years Foundation Stage:

By the end of EYFS stage, the children will have an understanding of a number of different aspects of Christianity. They will have explored questions about the world and will have an understanding of why Jesus is special for Christians. They will focus on a number of the parables and miracles of Jesus. They will learn about key Christian festivals including Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Children will be taught key vocabulary appropriate to their age and will be able to talk about some important Biblical stories.

Religious Education in Key Stage One:

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level. Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. Children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life. They will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own. Some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two:

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths (Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism).

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level. That they will be able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary. That they will have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life. We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two, to be able to express and justify their own views with confidence. We aim for them to be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts. We want our children to be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

Access to the curriculum

We recognise, through our adaptive planning system, that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts and knowledge and to flourish.

All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

Impact of Teaching and Learning

- Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews. (Religious literacy)
- Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points as a result of a rich and engaging RE curriculum.
- Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- Children will be able to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.
- Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness.

Environment and Resources

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which Religious Education can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking. Teaching is enhanced through use of a range of resources on different religions including books, videos, knowledge organisers and religious artefacts.

We plan and organise the environment, with a range of tasks and activities that are adapted accordingly, to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of

development and learning need. We promote both independent and collaborative working. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Each classroom has a 'Big Question' display where the main question for the unit and subsidiary questions are displayed along with key vocabulary.

We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts. We value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors.

We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with our parish and work collaboratively with our local churches, chaplains and wider community. Each year group has a designated member of the clergy team who supports the teaching of RE. We are also supported by the local Christian schools work charity Insight.

Assessment

Religious Education is considered an academic subject at our school. Therefore our procedures for tracking progress are rigorous. We assess RE in a number of ways including:

- Planned assessment opportunities identified at the beginning of a unit of learning.
- Ongoing formative assessment opportunities consisting of:
 - *high quality teacher questioning*
 - *teacher observations particularly around children's verbal contributions to class and group discussions*
 - *teacher observations of when children are engaging in collaborative learning opportunities*
 - *Teaching Assistants scribing children's verbal responses during class discussions and debates*
 - *quality verbal and written feedback*
- Ongoing self and peer assessment
- Summative assessment

Children are assessed according to whether they are working below the expected level, at the expected level or working at greater depth. 'I can statements' are used to assess children's understanding. Progress is tracked using the FFT Aspire programme.

Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help children flourish. The curriculum content is published on the school website and pupil progress in RE is discussed at Parent / Teacher meetings and reported on in the annual reports.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- Subject Leader and Governor learning walks
- Moderation of RE books by staff
- Moderation of RE books with other church schools in the London Diocese

- Subject monitoring by RE Lead (including pupil voice and book looks)
- Case Studies of pupils

This ensures that the teaching and learning of RE is pitched accurately and provides all pupils with learning tasks that give scope for children to meet expected standards and greater depth expectations where possible.

Continued Professional Development

All staff receive high-quality CPD in RE in order to build knowledge and effective practice. The RE subject leader and SLT keep up to date with developments in the area of Religious Education through reading, attending LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools.

Safeguarding

St Mary's and St. Peter's school fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. Our RE Policy is one of a range of documents which set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the school. We wish to create a safe, welcoming and vigilant environment for children where they feel valued and are respected.

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