



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Religious Education Policy for St Mary's CE School

Approved by Ethos Committee:

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January 2020

Religious Education Policy

Introduction

'Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.'

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales October 2013

At St. Mary's school we have a strong Christian ethos which pervades all aspects of school life: Children and adults are encouraged to treat others with kindness, consideration and respect. We aim to develop our children's knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity and of other faiths. We work towards lasting harmony between faith communities which depends on individuals having a clear understanding of their own faith and a respect for the faith and non-religious world views of their neighbours. We have a strong link with our parish church and are supported in the teaching of religious education (RE) by the vicar and chaplain.

RE is taught in accordance with the non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education (RE Council for England and Wales 2013) and The Richmond upon Thames agreed syllabus, following the LDBS Scheme of Work.

Our Aims

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals;
- Identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews;
- Appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- Explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
- Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
- Appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview⁹.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- Find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;
- Enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;
- Articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

Legal Requirements

In accordance with the law, St Mary's CE School teaches RE alongside the legal requirement for the national curriculum 2013 to offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Parents are informed in the school prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE. In such cases parents should consult the Headteacher well in advance so that alternative arrangements can be made for their child.

The Scheme of Work

The scheme of work follows the guidelines of the Diocese of London and the RE Council National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCFRE). As an Anglican school, Christianity has a central role in the scheme taking up approximately 70% of the curriculum. In addition to Christianity KS1 children also learn about Judaism with some teaching on Sikhism. In KS2 children learn about Judaism, Sikhism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Each year group has a unit which explores our responsibility to the local or world community or the environment.

RE is taught in half-termly units through books, use of the internet, discussion, drama, debate, music, art, dance, religious artefacts, play, school visitors and visits to places of worship. Teachers are also expected to provide lessons that allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global.

Teaching and Learning

In line with the DfE's 2013 EYFS Profile RE, through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity, provides opportunities for pupils in:

- Communication and language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design
- Literacy
- Mathematics

Further progression in RE follows the LDBS Scheme of Work so that in KS1 (Years 1 and 2) pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject-specific vocabulary. They are encouraged to raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

In KS2 (Years 3 to 6) pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They are introduced to an extended range of sources and subject-specific vocabulary. They are encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

Through RE, children have the opportunity to develop many key skills such as thinking, researching, evaluating, reflecting and empathising. Whenever possible links will be made between RE and other curriculum subjects.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

RE is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHCE) and our Collective Worship, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important.

RE introduces children to the significance of belonging to a community and to the diversity of communities in the wider world. It teaches respect for values such as freedom and democracy, and the fundamental equality of all people.

'In a world that is increasingly marked by division and prejudice, church schools have a responsibility to eradicate religious and racial intolerance, and to witness to the love of God for all humanity.'

Expressions of Faith, LDBS Guidelines for RE 1997

Inclusion

In all our planning and teaching, it is the aim of the school to develop an inclusive curriculum. We aim to ensure that the RE curriculum is accessible to all children regardless of gender, race, ability and belief system.

St Mary's CE School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at St Mary's school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

Equal Opportunities

At St Mary's the teaching of RE is approached with the following principles and practices in mind:

- No presumptions are made as to the religious or otherwise backgrounds, beliefs and values of the children or staff.
- The religious and non-religious backgrounds of all members of the school community are equally valued.
- Encouragement and opportunities are given to individuals to share their own experiences with others.
- Links between home, school and faith communities are highly valued.
- It is acknowledged that every religion and worldview studied can contribute to the education of all pupils.
- Teaching that stresses open enquiry and first-hand experiences is promoted.

- Children's personal experiences from other faiths and worldviews (i.e. apart from Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism which are already being studied) are welcomed.
- The understanding of religious beliefs and multicultural awareness is fostered through assemblies, celebrations, concerts, drama productions and displays.

Assessment and Reporting

The standard of work in RE is expected to meet the targets children are following in other core subjects. Children's responses and outcomes from their RE work should be recorded in books or files and any photographs that are taken of work or visits should be stored on the school system in appropriate RE folders. Trips and visitors to the school are shared and celebrated on our website. As we encourage a creative approach to the learning of RE, teachers may record pupils' responses to their learning in a variety of ways. Displays of the work are also valued. To assess the children's level in RE, teachers are expected to give an overall level for each child, using the level descriptors provided by the RE leader, and using the electronic assessment method for the attainment targets, following our scheme of work. Children's work is monitored, evaluated and compared within year groups and across key stages for progression.

Children will be assessed in RE each half term. The area for assessment is highlighted in the scheme of work and is linked to the attainment targets for RE. This can be used by the teacher to inform future planning. Assessment is recorded by the class teachers and monitored by the RE leader. Parents are informed of each pupil's progress during parents meetings and in the end-of-year reports.

The Role of the RE Leader

The teaching, assessing and resourcing of RE is led by the RE leader in close collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team. It is the role of the RE leader to work with teaching staff in developing the confidence and skills necessary for teaching RE. The RE leader is responsible for monitoring the RE curriculum and evaluating and updating the scheme of work when necessary.

Resources

There are a number of artefacts available to support teaching and learning about religious faiths, as well as books, DVDs and CDs. Artefacts and resources are kept centrally on each site. There are also resources in the school libraries.

The recent purchase of new books, DVDs and CDs aims to support the Christian ethos of St Mary's School. With these new multimedia resources we hope to nourish our children's sense of God, inspire growth of their religious imagination and lead them into greater religious maturity as young people. These resources offer better understanding of the Christian Bible, Tradition of the Church, Liturgy, Saints and other religions. While exploring the Christian/Anglican foundation of our school (including the patron the Virgin Mary), these resources take into account the current ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The books, DVDs and CDs also serve to introduce the value of spirituality, compassion and moral life to children who come from non-religious background. In addition we hope to provide our teachers with a greater range of multimedia resources which will enhance teaching of RE in classrooms.