



# **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

## **Religious Education Policy for St Mary's CE School**

**Reviewed by the Governing Body:**

**September 2023**

**Date of next review:**

**February 2025**

## Religious Education Policy

### Introduction:

This policy aims to set out how and why religious education (RE) is taught at St Mary's CE Primary School. It aims to ensure continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of high quality and stimulating Religious Education. This policy is written with reference throughout to the Church of England Education Office document '*Religious Education in Church Schools: A Statement of Entitlement*' (2016).

### Our Vision

*Growing and learning together to be our best, inspired by Jesus' love.*

At St Mary's we balance excellence with compassion. By offering the finest education, inspired by the love of Jesus Christ, we nurture our children to reach their full potential, celebrating their unique and special worth.

Care and compassion are at the heart of every child's learning, encouraging their capacity for reflective thought to make a more creative difference in our world. We strive for and celebrate excellence throughout the school community, building our children's resilience to embrace the challenges of our age with confidence.

Our motto is Conemur – may we try together – striving to be our best, for ourselves, our community and our world.

*"True love shows itself in action" (1 John 3:18)*

### 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 with compassion, in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

### **Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in Church schools are:**

- 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 of living, believing and thinking.

### **Curriculum balance and time:**

Parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. 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% in key stages 1-4.

### **Legal requirements:**

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over).

*(DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28)*

The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes.

The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision.

The right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship (Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2010).

Parents may withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship, and not to withdraw the child from the remainder of their RE.

### **How we teach RE:**

RE at St Marys is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum and the school theologically rooted vision.

### **The intent of the LDBS syllabus:**

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables children live out our vision of 'true love shows itself in action'.
- 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:****Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:**

**Enquire:** Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, philosophy or human/social science.

**Investigate/explore:** What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This ‘explore’ stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to ‘deepen’ 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 engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc)
- Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues

**Rationale behind the curriculum map**

The intention throughout the curriculum is to learn from what Jesus taught us – Growing and learning together to be our best, inspired by Jesus’ love. In Reception and KS1, children are introduced to the Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) alongside Sikhism. In KS2 we build on Judaism and Islam and we explore two other faiths, Hinduism in Year 3 and Year 5 and Buddhism in Year 4 and Year 5. By the time children come to end of the primary school journey, they have solid foundation of all 6 world faiths. Judaism and Islam have 3 units to reflect our growing diverse population and our school’s proximity to Hounslow where many of our children live.

**Evaluate/communicate:** 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? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

**Reflect on/express:** 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? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage:**

RE is guided by the Early Learning goals alongside the LDBS planning. It is taught weekly and as a discrete subject. Links are planned throughout, with other areas of learning, to ensure a meaningful cross-curricular approach. Children learn about God's world, they build a better relationship with God through Jesus and explore how to care for God's world. Lessons are planned and taught using clear objectives and provide opportunities for follow up in the areas of Communication and Language, Literacy, Mathematics, Expressive Arts and Design, Understanding of the World and Physical Development. The study of world faiths comes through aspects covered in Understanding of the World.

### **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.

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 critically 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 compassion, equal respect and worth. They are valued regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

### **Impact of the LDBS syllabus:**

- 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:**

Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. Our Trustees contribute to the resourcing of RE. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also enable visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which Religious Education can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking.

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.

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 the church and wider community.

### **Planning, assessment, recording, monitoring and evaluation:**

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is two thirds Christian and one third other major world faiths.

### **Assessment**

Teachers will summarise pupils' attainment in RE at the end of each term using the LDBS assessment scheme which measures progress towards key questions for each year group. Teachers report to parents on pupils' progress towards these key questions in annual reports. At St Mary's, we recognise that achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects. We want all pupils to develop high levels of religious literacy as well as deep understanding of Christianity and other religions and world views.

To assess pupils' attainment and progress in RE, teachers make a judgment for each pupil using the criteria provided by the LDBS scheme of work. Pupils' work is monitored, evaluated and compared within year groups and across key stages for progression and consistency in judgments.

Pupils 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 parent meetings and in the end-of-year reports.

### **Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in the following way:**

#### **Continued professional development:**

We make use of our GROW package with the LDBS to ensure that CPD for all staff is of high quality. The RE leader attends RE network meeting and information from this is feedback to staff. The Headteacher is an LDBS Primary Advisor who benefits from training for her to work with other schools, which she then cascades to staff at St Mary's School. This ensures that staff receive information and support directly from the Deputy Director of the LDBS responsible for RE and SIAMs.

**Parents and Carers:**

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help children flourish. Parents are informed of their child's progress in RE during parents evening and in their end of year report. Parents regularly join collective worship, class worships and church services.

**Role of the RE subject leader:****The subject leader will:**

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- To 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.
- To monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching and assessment of Religious Education across the school in collaboration with the leadership team.
- To support staff in the teaching of Religious Education across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation.
- To lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards.
- To plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective Religious Education teaching.
- To work closely with the senior leadership team to identify CPD needs of individuals, teams and the whole school.
- To regular review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

**Evaluation/Review:**

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every **two years** by the Governing Body.