

Our vision - Good ground grows well.



ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Through our Christian ethos, we teach children to hear, understand and live the word of God, helping them to give back to the world as global citizens. As every child is uniquely created in God's image, we nurture their individual development through a holistic approach to all aspects of life

RE POLICY

Date policy accepted by the Governing Body:	Spring 2024
Date for review:	Spring 2027

St Mary's Vision

'Rooted, Grow, Flourish' – inspired by the Parable of the Sower

A community that gives each child an outstanding spiritual, academic, and practical education, and instills an awareness of the joy, love, and peace that flows from God's presence in their lives, so that they are able to achieve their potential and truly experience 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10).

We believe that when children experience the joy, love, and peace that comes from God, that love naturally flows out into others and the world around them. Their minds become clear, focused, and ready to make decisions that benefit everyone. Just as a seed grows and bears fruit, the love and learning that fills each child spreads outward — nurturing relationships, community, and the wider environment.

At St Mary's, we approach the teaching of RE with this vision in mind. Knowledge and understanding flow from teachers, faith leaders, and peers into each child, who then develops the skills and confidence to let that understanding flow outward. This is how St Mary's nurtures theologically literate and spiritually aware learners.

When our children are rooted in God's love, their growth benefits the whole school and local community, connecting everyone and fostering an environment where every child receives an outstanding spiritual, academic, and practical education.

Values

St Mary's has five core Christian values: *Love, Faith, Respect, Perseverance, and Service*. These values are central to the life of our school and are lived out by pupils both in the classroom and beyond. They guide how we learn, how we treat one another, and how we grow as a community rooted in God's love.

To support children in exploring and living out these values, St Mary's has recently adopted the **Windows, Mirrors, Doors** framework. This helps children:

- use *Windows* to look outward at the world and learn from the lives and experiences of others,
- use *Mirrors* to reflect inwardly on their own thoughts, actions, and understanding of the school's values, and

- use *Doors* to take positive action by living out these values through service, respect, and love in their daily lives.

To strengthen the partnership between school, home, and church, resources are also shared with families to encourage reflection and application of these values beyond the school gates.

What is Religious Education?

Religious Education (RE) at St Mary's provides pupils with the opportunity to explore and engage with spiritual, moral, social, and cultural questions. It helps children to reflect on their own beliefs, understand the beliefs of others, and develop a framework for making sense of life. RE is an essential part of our Christian ethos and contributes to the holistic development of every child, supporting the school's vision of being *Rooted, Grow, Flourish*.

The aims of Religious Education are to help children:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity as the school's principal religion, as well as other major world religions and value systems represented in Britain;
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- Be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- Develop an understanding of religious traditions and appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- Develop investigative and research skills to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- Have respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity in society.

Aims

The aims of Religious Education at St Mary's are to:

- Encourage children to grow in their spiritual development through reflection on feelings and relationships, and through developing a sense of awe, wonder, and mystery.
- Help children explore a range of questions and consider both religious and non-religious responses to them.
- Support children in developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity, its impact on people's lives, and its importance to society and cultural heritage.
- Enable children to consider their own values and commitments, while fostering sensitivity to the values and commitments of believers from a variety of religious traditions.
- Help children develop knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of the beliefs and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- Support the development of skills and attitudes that enhance children's personal, social, and moral growth.
- Encourage understanding of different forms of religious expression.
- Enable children to evaluate their learning experiences in Religious Education.
- Help pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that allow them to participate fully in, and contribute positively to, life in modern Britain

Objectives

The objectives of Religious Education at St Mary's are to encourage children to explore and reflect on spiritual, moral, and ethical questions in life experiences, and to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and its impact

on people's lives, as well as other major world religions and value systems in Britain. They enable children to consider their own values and commitments, while fostering sensitivity to the values and commitments of believers from different religious traditions. They help children develop knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of the beliefs and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain, and encourage children to develop skills and attitudes that enhance their personal, social, and moral growth. They promote understanding of different forms of religious expression, support children in evaluating their learning experiences in Religious Education, and enable pupils to develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that allow them to participate fully in, and contribute positively to, life in modern Britain

Teaching and Learning

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development allowing their cup to overflow and spread the Christian message in the local community.

We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum. Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies especially for our children who are of a different world faith to Christianity.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- Grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Children should have opportunities to learn about religion from a range of resources including

- artefacts, e.g. statues, icons, incense, beads etc
- pictures, photographs and slides
- music
- dance and drama
- stories, plays and poems
- visits to places of worship (Y3 St Albans Cathedral, Y4 Gudwara, Y6 Islamic Centre)
- religious and non-religious texts
- ICT
- Visits from leaders of other faiths (Rabbi etc)
- Other children in the class

Feedback to pupils about their own progress in R.E. is achieved through:

- effective marking of written work used sensitively and with discretion so that a child can assimilate a limited number of corrections at one time - this will vary according to age and ability
- discussion between child and teacher
- helping children learn by encouraging them to think critically about what they have achieved (self-evaluation)

Curriculum planning in religious education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the LDBS Syllabus which meets all the requirements of the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects as well, especially at Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.

RE Co-ordinator

The role of the R.E. Co-ordinator is to:

- take the lead in policy development and support staff in the production of long-term plans to ensure progression and continuity in R.E. throughout the school
- support colleagues in their development of medium-term plans, their implementation of the long-term plans and in their assessment and record keeping activities
- to support the knowledge and teaching of Religious Education through monitoring and the participating and delivering of CPD
- report back to the Governing Body annually.
- monitor progress in R.E. and advise the Headteacher on action needed
- take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources for R.E.
- keep up-to-date with developments in R.E. education and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate

Assessment

Verbal and written tasks are levelled at the end of each lesson according to the objectives set in the planning. We then track each child in our FFT pupil tracking system to allow effective tracking of all pupils and pupil groups across the school. The RE coordinator then uses this assessment to provide tailored information to the class teachers about the ability of the children in their class.

Equal opportunities

1. Positive identity including gender and ethnicity must be encouraged by initiating activities across the whole curriculum, which reflect a diverse society. We should aim to present information and images about each gender and cultural group, drawing as much as possible from the children's experiences appreciating the similarities as well as the diversity.

2. Differing languages and dialects should be experienced in the classroom and should be given positive images in the school generally. Sexist, prejudice and racist comments should not be tolerated or condoned.
3. We should be aware that prejudice can be taught, transmitted and reinforced even unintentionally.
4. Refer to Equal Opportunities Policy and EM/EAL Policy.

Equal Opportunities

We will set high expectations and provide opportunities for all learners to achieve success in Religious Education regardless of culture, race, gender, ability or disability. Teachers will strive to overcome any potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups and respond to learners' diverse learning needs by planning approaches to teaching and learning in Religious Education so that all learners are given equal opportunities, set suitable learning challenges and can take part in lessons fully and effectively.

Inclusion

All learners receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities are differentiated accordingly. In addition, where identified learners are considered to require targeted support to enable them to work towards age appropriate objectives, intervention programmes will be implemented. The senior management team with subject leaders decides which intervention programmes, i.e. second wave of support, will be used in the school. Teachers and teaching assistants plan programmes together and monitor progress of these learners.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher and subject leader will monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with all members of the teaching staff and governors. An annual self-evaluation form will be produced to monitor RE across the school. This will subsequently be used to aid the Headteacher in the completion of the school self-evaluation form.

Role of the Governor

Issues regarding R.E. are reported to governors during formal and informal visits. This policy is available to parents for comment on the School Website. Pupils are given the opportunity to comment on relevant issues through the school council.