

Our vision - Good ground grows well.



ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Religious Education Policy

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

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.

Our School Vision

The vision of St Mary's is grounded in the Parable of the Sower. Through collective and personal prayer, children are taught how to communicate with God in both good and difficult times. Through teaching and lived example, children learn to look to the Gospels for inspiration and develop a secure understanding of what it means to hope, persist, forgive and be forgiven. We acknowledge that every member of our school community is unique, with their own particular interests, strengths and weaknesses. However, through listening to God, everyone at St Mary's seeks to grow in His grace, becoming more open to His love and giving back to the world many times over. We aim to provide a stimulating curriculum with an environmental focus that will prepare our children both intellectually and spiritually for the challenges of the 21st century.

Values

St Mary's has five core values: Faith, Love, Perseverance, Respect and Service. These are embedded throughout our school and children are praised and rewarded for living these values in their daily lives. Resources, to help parents and children understand and embed these at home, are shared on our newsletter every half term as well as being focused on in collective worship.

What is Religious Education?

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 and other major world religions and value systems found 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 to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- Develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society

Aims

- 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
- to help children explore a range of questions and to consider religious and non-religious responses to them
- to help children to develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity; its impact on people's lives and its importance to society and cultural heritage
- to enable children to consider their own values and commitments and a sensitivity to the values and commitments of believers from a variety of religious traditions
- to enable children to develop knowledge, understanding and acceptance of the beliefs and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain

- to help children develop skills and attitudes which will enhance their personal, social and moral development
- to help children develop an understanding of different forms of religious expression
- to help children to evaluate their learning experiences in Religious Education
- to help pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain

Objectives

At St Mary's Primary School, we believe that we can achieve our aims by incorporating religious, spiritual and moral education into our curriculum be it as a dimension of humanities in our environment, as a dimension of the arts or through hidden curriculum. We acknowledge that as a Church school we have four families, our home, school, community and church family and these are all important to us. We hope to instill respect for religious and moral values and to help pupils to acquire a reasoned set of attitudes, values and beliefs. Through this a deeper sense of spirituality will be encouraged in our children through a constant desire to inspire a sense of awe and wonder in them.

We then want our children to share their knowledge enabling themselves to grow and flourish. We want them to communicate fluently about their own faith and the faiths of those around them. We want them to share what they are learning at home, at a place of worship and with friends and family.

R.E. is an integral part of the life and ethos of St Mary's Primary School as outlined in our school brochure, website and in all of our marketing we produce for our school. R.E. is taught as a discrete subject but Christian values are taught in a wide variety of contexts through all subjects.

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 them to flourish 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
- religious and non-religious texts
- ICT
- Visits from leaders of other faiths
- 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

Planning in RE is currently supported by the LDBS and Understanding Christianity syllabus. 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.

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 school must grant without question any request from a parent to withdraw their child. To enable clear communication, requests are to be made to the headteacher in writing, by email. Parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to withdraw their child. However, in view of the distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. This is supported by ensuring that prospective families are fully informed as to what pupils learn and how pupils learn in RE. The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by their parent(s) from RE, unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere. If this is the case, the governing body must be satisfied that this will not interfere with the child's attendance at school. If a pupil is withdrawn from RE, parents will have the opportunity to

revisit and reconsider this decision. The school will keep a record of all those withdrawn and for how many sessions.

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.

1. Positive identity including gender and ethnicity must be encouraged by initiating activities across the whole curriculum, which reflect a diverse society. We 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 Equality Policy.

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 leadership 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.

Role of the Governor

Issues regarding RE are reported to governors during formal and informal visits. The Governing Body supports all aspects of RE through appropriate visits to rigorously strengthen and encourage our distinctive Christian ethos. They uphold our vision and values which underpin every action and decision taken by the Governing Body. This policy is available to parents/carers for comment on the School Website. Pupils are given the opportunity to comment on relevant issues through the school council and by informing their RE Ambassadors. The current link governor for RE is our Vice Chair – Revd. Ann Lynes.