



St. Mary's Primary School Religious Education Policy

1 IMPORTANCE OF Religious Education

The Education Reform Act, 1988 (Section 1) states that the curriculum of each maintained school should be balanced and broadly based and should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society. It should prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Each school has a statutory responsibility to teach Religious Education as a subject in its own right. Religious Education, along with English, Mathematics, Science and Information and Communication Technology, forms the Basic Curriculum for all schools.

The content of Religious Education must then ensure breadth and balance across each key stage and throughout the key stages. We ensure, through our RE curriculum coverage, that we meet the Statement of Entitlement as outline by the Church of England Education Office.

2 SCHOOL'S PHILOSOPHY

The school provides a vital resource for Religious Education, a place where children encounter a "living faith" through;

- The value which is placed on each individual;
- An ethos which reflects mutual care and concern;
- A clear expression of Christian values;

- The experience of collective worship, as a quality important to the life of the school;
- An environment which encourages moral, religious and spiritual growth;
- Active links with church life (particularly the local churches of St. Mary's, St. Paul's and St. George's)

Overall aims

We seek to:

- give the children in our care a rich variety of experiences and encourage an environment within our school community through which they can develop the skills, attitudes and knowledge
- allow pupils to learn from, and about religion, not to persuade pupils to accept or reject a particular religious tradition
- help pupils recognise that people behave in certain ways because of the beliefs they hold
- encourage pupils to have respect for others with different beliefs, practices and ways of living.

3 SYLLABUS

RE is not nationally determined. We follow the Diocese of Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education. We also use the Understanding Christianity Document for the teaching of Christianity.

Understanding Christianity

Since September 2017 the school has fully implemented Understanding Christianity for the teaching of Christianity across school. The key purpose of these materials is to support pupils in developing their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. It aims to:

- enable pupils to know about and understanding Christianity as a living world faith, by exploring core theological concepts
- enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of Biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians
- develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief (particularly Christianity), of themselves, the world and experience

Understanding Christianity has a clear line of progression with key concepts being developed as the pupils move through school.

In FS2 the children are taught about Creation, Incarnation and Salvation. These concepts are developed further and join by Gospel and God in KS1. In KS2 two further concepts are taught: People of God and Kingdom of God.

4 TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR RE

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, an awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own by Learning about Religions and Learning from Religion.

Learning about Religions

This includes exploring and examining religious beliefs, spirituality, teachings, worship, practices, behaviour and ways of expressing meaning.

Learning from Religion

This includes exploring and responding to questions of identity, diversity, belonging, experience, meaning, purpose, value, commitment and spirituality.

Christianity holds a central place in our school, however, we also want to begin to develop our children's understanding and respect of other faiths and cultures.

Early Years

Religious Education is taught to our pupils through a range of ways. RE objectives are covered through free play activities, circle times and religious stories. RE at this stage is mainly approached through the children's own experiences and takes place both through spontaneous happenings and planned activities. The children learn about themselves, their relationships with others and the world around them. Opportunities for stillness and quietness to further the child's capacity for reflection and thinking will be sought. Children have access to a wide range of opportunities to extend their understanding of their own faith and the faith of others, answering questions such as 'Why are places special?' and 'Which stories are special?'

Key Stage 1

Children share their experiences of faith and belonging, learn about the place of prayer in religion, understand the role of the Church and answer questions such as 'Who am I? What does it mean to belong?' At least two thirds of RE teaching in KSI is Christianity. The children also explore aspects of Judaism. They will answer the question, 'Who is Jewish and how do they live?'

Key Stage 2

RE in Key Stage 2 continues to be rooted in children's own experience, but they are also encouraged to look beyond their immediate experiences. The children will begin to learn how Christianity is expressed in individual lifestyles, as well as in the family and church contexts. They also look at Christianity as a world religion, discussing how festivals are celebrated globally.

As in Key Stage One at least two thirds of the RE content is Christianity. In lower Key Stage Two the pupils answer questions such as 'What are the deeper meaning of festivals?' and 'How and why do believers show their commitment during the journey of life?' In Year 3 and 4 the pupils also study Hinduism.

As the children become more aware of themselves in relation to others, they are encouraged to enter imaginatively into the experiences of others. We hope to widen their knowledge and experience of religious practices and beliefs.

In Upper Key Stage Two the pupils answer questions such as 'Why is pilgrimage important?' and 'Why do some people believe in God and some people do not?' In Year 5 and Year 6 the pupils also study Islam.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Religious Education, as an essential part of the curriculum, should be relevant and worthwhile for all. It should express that all pupils are loved and valued by God as part of Creation. We hope to help all our children to respect themselves and be sensitive to the needs of others. We believe that everyone has an entitlement to participate in Religious Education regardless of race, gender, special needs or disability.

However, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE provision.

6 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Children with special educational needs work with the same content of RE as the other children but at a different level and speed in accordance with our SEN policy. When planning schemes of work, careful thought is given to the range of language used and a variety of teaching and learning approaches is sought to ensure all children are able to access the RE curriculum.

7 PLANNING AND RECORDING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education in school is taught either as a separate subject or planned as part of topic work in a cross-curricular way. Pupils work in an RE book, however much of RE is taught through discussions, drama and art. Recording work in RE also takes a variety of forms including video recording, photographs etc.

We have adopted a developmental approach for teaching the festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Each year group has a theme or key idea, so that the festivals are not covered in exactly the same way each year. This ensures that knowledge and understanding is built upon from previous years.

Portfolios are kept to celebrate work carried out and show the range of content covered. These are shared with visitors in the Main Entrance of school.

8 LEADERSHIP AND MONITORING

GOVERNORS' ROLE

The Religious Education Policy is shared with the Governing Body, as is the School Development plan for RE. The school has a named Governor for RE and Collective Worship: Father Craig.

COORDINATOR'S ROLE

The co-ordinator, working with the senior leadership, has responsibility for the continuity and progression of the teaching of Religious Education in the school. The RE co-ordinator is Mrs Jane Race.

- To be responsible for co-ordinating RE throughout the school and acting in an advisory capacity.
- To attend in-service courses and keep colleagues informed.
- Be involved in staff training and support NQTs
- To lead staff discussions when updating the RE policy or scheme of work and thematic approaches.
- To monitor and evaluate RE throughout the school.
- To be responsible for the updating, ordering, organisation and storage of RE resources.
- Try and support colleagues and as far as possible be a source of information on religious aspects.
- Actively promote effective RE within the school and its community and to keep the profile of RE high within the school.

Last reviewed on September 2023

Next Review due by September 2004

