



Religious Education Policy

Date	Review Date	Responsible Person	Responsible Body
September 2024	September 2025	Sheila Buckley (Head)	Reverend Dr Rachel Greene

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10).

It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together.

Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.

(Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)

Introduction

At St Mary's Church of England School, pupils and their families can expect a high quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews.

As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Using the Religious Education Guidelines provided by the Diocese of Guildford, we take time to consider and discuss key aspects of Christianity, and also learn about other religions and worldviews, fostering respect for them.

Links with our Christian values and vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

Aims and objectives

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all pupils:

- 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 world views 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 for Religious Education

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to blossom and grow. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.
- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy.
- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.
- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.
- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs.
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs.

Curriculum balance and time

As a church school following the guidelines provided by Guildford Diocese, Christianity is the majority religion studied in each year group and represents at least 50% of RE curriculum time. Within the context of the entire school curriculum, 5% - 10% of time is dedicated to explicitly studying RE objectives in each year group.

The school fully acknowledges that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. At St Mary's, significant time and attention is invested in ensuring that collective worship is a key part of daily life, providing opportunities for reflection and contemplation.

Teaching and learning

Learning activities provide fully for the needs of *all* pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- reading and critically analysing texts
- interpreting information from different sources
- seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers
- listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils
- engaging in pair and group work
- exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama
- experiencing visits and visitors
- taking part in outdoor learning
- taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and worldviews in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

Differentiation

In line with the school's Quality First Teaching approach, suitable opportunities for learning are provided for **all** children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and experience of the child.

More specifically, we differentiate by:

- setting open-ended tasks
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty
- using additional resources to support the work of specific individuals
- using peer support by partnering pupils of different abilities to complete tasks

Cross-curricular links

Religious education supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It addresses issues, which arise in a range of subjects, such as Literacy, Art, Drama and History, Geography, Computing, Music as well as Personal, Social and Emotional Education and Citizenship.

Health and safety

Health and safety issues may arise in RE lessons on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- handle artefacts
- consume food
- visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in St Mary's Health and Safety Policy in these circumstances.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- be directly related to the expectations of Guildford Diocese. All teachers are required to complete the end of unit assessment grids, highlighting learning both of and from religious education
- require all teachers to follow the school's marking policy, ensuring that the standards that are expected in other core subjects (notably Literacy) are also maintained in RE lessons
- include pupil self-assessment (where appropriate)
- enable effective reporting to parents.

Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will do the following.

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#).
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up-to-date.
- Ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff.
- Liaise with the Headteacher and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- 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.



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. The school makes use of guidance material and artefact boxes produced by the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and worldviews as appropriate.

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). 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.

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 Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our 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.

Headteacher:		Date:	Sept 2024
Chair of LGC:		Date:	Sept 2024