



**St Mary's CE Primary School**  
Felsham Road  
Putney

# **Religious Education Policy**

*At St. Mary's we provide an education of the highest quality to enable every child to realise their potential within a nurturing Christian community.*

## **Introduction**

Religious Education deals with one of the most important parts of the curriculum, yet one of the hardest to define and plan, namely the attempt to deal with the fact that people in all societies have tried to recognise ultimate values and to grapple with the meaning of life.

Religious Education is for all children and this policy has been written for all our children at St Mary's School. Each of them must see that those things that matter most, in terms of faith and culture, are valued and protected by Religious Education.

## **The Legal Requirements**

Religious Education is part of the curriculum by law.

The Education Act 1944 and The Education Act 1988 require that:-

- 1.) As part of the curriculum, **Religious Education** should promote the "Spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils."
- 2.) An Agreed Syllabus, should ". . . reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain."

*(Education Act 1944, Section 8 (3.))*

- 3.) Syllabuses must not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils."

*(See also Education Act 1944, Section 26 (2.))*

Religious Education should be taught to all pupils in full-time education, except for those withdrawn at the wish of their parents.

*(Details to be found in Department for Education Circular 1/94, Paragraph 44.)*

[However, as St Mary's is a Church of England Voluntary-Aided school, we would expect that in choosing our school for their child, no parents will wish to withdraw their child from RE.]

Our Religious Education is informed by: -

- ❖ Religious Education The non-statutory National Framework.

*(Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency. 2004.)*

- ❖ Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory Guidance 2010

*(Department for Children, Schools and Families.)*

It is important to remember that it is not the place of Religious Education to impose a system of belief on pupils that they will be required to accept. However as St Mary's is a Church of England Voluntary-Aided school, it is our responsibility, as a faith community, to give our children an education rooted in the Christian Faith, with a strong foundation of Christianity at its heart.

## **The Aims of Religious Education**

In our Religious Education we aim to help children to: -

- 1.) Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal monotheistic religions represented in the United Kingdom.
- 2.) Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- 3.) Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of Christianity and the other principal monotheistic religions represented in the United Kingdom.
- 4.) Enhance their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:-
  - a.) Developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them.
  - b.) Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions, and to their own understanding and experience.
  - c.) Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.
- 5.) Develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own, and towards living in a society of many religions.

## **Attitudes in Religious Education**

In our school we believe RE should help pupils to:

- think theologically and explore the great questions of life and death, meaning and purpose
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenge of Jesus' teaching in a pluralist and post-modern society
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text
- respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world
- understand how religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

RE should equip pupils to recognise the common search of all humanity, for ultimate truth and relationship with the divine. It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world, therefore, that respect for the great world faiths is fostered in RE in our Church School. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other faiths which is consistent with the school's loyalty to its Christian foundation.

Therefore RE in our school should also help pupils to:

- learn about other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practice and from them through encounter and dialogue
- recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God

- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths
- enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions
- recognise the common human quest for justice, peace and love and the common goal of the survival of life on this planet.

**Aspects that ensure the distinctive nature and content of our RE Curriculum includes:**

- opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year
- visits to places of worship, especially our local parish Church, to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community
- welcoming visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life
- liaison with the local parish to enable these visits and links to occur
- access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- encouragement of mutual respect based on Christian values, where pupils and teachers are able to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule
- pupils to make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity
- pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith
- pupils with no religious background to face the challenge of the Christian faith
- pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the place of doubt and certainty in a maturing faith.

**ChristianValues**

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern are promoted through all areas of school life.

There are some attitudes that are fundamental to RE though, in that they are prerequisites for entering fully into the study of religions, and learning from that experience.

The following are included: - commitment, fairness and respect.

As children explore the beliefs and practices of their own faith and those of others, we will provide opportunities for reflection upon their own attitudes, beliefs and experiences.

**Sensitivity**

We always endeavour to be sensitive to the needs and beliefs of different Faiths in our delivery of Religious Education.

Throughout the RE that is planned for delivering our scheme of work, we encourage children to develop attitudes, concepts and skills which promote

their spiritual development and enable them to approach this subject with sensitivity.

### **Skills and Processes in Religious Education**

Religious Education contributes to pupils' spiritual growth through the development of skills, processes and attitudes.

The following skills are central to Religious Education, and are also apparent in other subjects in the curriculum. They are reflected in our two Attainment Targets: - Learning about Religion and Learning from Religion and in the learning opportunities that we aim to offer: - investigation, interpretation, reflection, empathy, analysis, synthesis, application and expression.

Throughout the education process, children can explore religious concepts and are enabled to reflect on meaning and purpose; this includes their own spiritual journey and ultimate questions of purpose.

Each element of our scheme of work in RE offers a different and special opportunity to consider such issues.

### **Role of RE Subject Leader**

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in Religious Education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE Subject Leader informs staff about RE developments and delivers training either in INSET sessions or on an individual or group basis as necessary. S/he also informs and advises colleagues about CPD opportunities.

### **Our Religious Education Scheme of Work**

Religious Education must be varied, interesting, relevant, stimulating and challenging. We have endeavoured to organise an exciting and challenging scheme of work in RE to offer a range of experimental teaching and learning strategies.

We are required to promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils so that they may develop their own views and make informed choices and decisions for themselves as they move into adult life.

Our Scheme of Work in RE has been developed in the belief that Religious Education should play a central role in the promotion of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.

By following this scheme of work, in our planning we aim to ensure continuity and progression through RE.

Our Religious Education is based upon comprehensive guidance and units of work from: -

"Diocesan Schemes of Work."

*(New Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education 2016 from the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education)*

An overview of our Scheme of Work for Religious Education throughout the school can be found at **Appendix 1**. Full details of all units of work are available from the SDBE website and on our school Public Folder under RE/SDBE Units.

### **Godly Play**

In addition to our Programme of Study, Key Stage Two children take part in termly Godly Play sessions (the class is split in half for this) which are held in the Godly Play Room at St Mary's Church. The theme of each session is linked, as far as possible, to the children's learning in the classroom (RE and cross-curricular). The aim of Godly Play is to teach children the art of using religious language in parables, sacred stories, silence, and liturgical action to help them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives.

### **Cross-Curricular Links**

Religious Education can make links with the whole curriculum where appropriate, but we will ensure that its integrity as a subject is recognised. Classroom activities are planned to enable children to express their deepest responses, feelings and beliefs through and within other curriculum areas. RE makes a unique contribution to the cross-curricular theme of Citizenship, in particular, and also links in with aspects of the History, Geography, Music, Art and Literacy curriculum where we promote and explore links as appropriate.

RE is also a lead subject for Community Cohesion and we aim for our RE to be a catalyst in our school fulfilling our duty to promote Community Cohesion.

### **Using Religious Resources and Artefacts**

It is important that pupils are introduced to the sacred objects of many Faiths. We teach pupils how to treat resources including texts and objects with care, sensitivity and respect.

We give all our children access to, and experience of, a wide and rich range of religious resources and artefacts throughout their eight years of Religious Education with us.

In addition to religious artefacts that we already have in school, the children and their families are positively encouraged to bring artefacts in from home to share with us, and we regularly borrow RE resources and artefacts from Wandsworth Learning Resources Centre. Members of the different religions are welcomed into the school to share their faith with us and we recognise the value of learning outside the classroom, making regular visits to local places of worship, particularly St Mary's Church, All Saints Church, Southwark Cathedral and places of worship for other faiths being studied by the children (mosque, synagogue, gurdwara and Hindu and Buddhist temples).

## **Religious Education Displays**

RE is given a prominent and regular place in class displays. The displays are both informative and interactive and celebrate children's achievements and work in RE.

This curriculum area is a subject for whole-school display around the main areas of the school.

RE also enriches Prayer Areas in each classroom, helping to promote spiritual development. All classrooms have a cross on display and many common areas around the school have prominently displayed crosses and paintings expressing biblical verses.

## **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

In our Religious Education we aim to provide effective learning opportunities for all pupils.

We have used our syllabus as a starting point for planning a Religious Education curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of pupils.

We work to 3 principles that are essential to developing an inclusive curriculum in RE:

- a) Setting suitable learning challenges.
- b) Responding to pupils' diverse learning needs.
- c) Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individual and groups of people.

## **Assessment in Religious Education**

Assessment in Religious Education takes place in relation to both Attainment Targets: - AT1 Learning about Religion and AT2 Learning from Religion. Although assessment is continuous and is used as Assessment for Learning, in our scheme of work we also have planned summative assessment opportunities where we have identified opportunities for assessment and we then use the information to inform planning future work.

The Subject Leader has identified assessment opportunities for each year group to ensure that children are assessed against all six strands of the RE curriculum. Class teachers assess children termly and input children's attainment levels into the RE Assessment folder on our school computer system.

We use the following basis to make judgements about pupils' performance: - Foundation Stage: - Children's attainment is assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goals.

Key Stages 1 and 2: - Children's attainment is assessed using Level Descriptors in Pupil-Speak and Can-Do Statements.

## **RE Portfolios**

Each class has an RE Portfolio which is used by the class teacher for keeping a record of children's attainment in RE and for keeping samples of work as a record of good practice. The children's attainment data is passed on to the next class teacher but the Portfolio itself is kept in the class as a planning and assessment tool for the next cohort of children.

## **The Practice Code For Teachers of RE**

We have adopted Everyone Matters in the Classroom. A Practice Code for Teachers of RE from the Religious Education Council for England and Wales as a code upon which to base our practice in demonstrating respect for diversity and promoting equality in religious and non-religious belief in schools.

## **Partnership with the Governing Body**

The Governing Body of our school appoints a Link Governor with responsibility for Religious Education.

The Religious Education Subject Leader works with the Link Governor to develop an action plan and to prepare a report to the Children and Learning Committee of the Governors annually about Religious Education at St Mary's School.

## **The Journey of Religious Education**

Our responsibility, as teachers, is to create Religious Education that will enable the children to learn about and understand their own beliefs and those of others in a safe and non-threatening environment.

Religious Education is preparing pupils to live alongside friends, neighbours and colleagues with different answers from their own and providing a place in the curriculum and a vocabulary to enable pupils to attempt to make sense of their own views and concerns.

As always, but perhaps now more than ever, Religious Education is a vital component in the spiritual and moral development of our children, and our Religious Education aims at fostering unity and understanding and dispelling division and mistrust.

Many pupils will be engaged at times in a search for meaning and truth in their lives. Our Religious Education will hopefully enable them to explore their own responses to ultimate questions in the light of the answers which Christianity and the other major religions have found.

Religious Education is at its most relevant where ultimate questions of meaning and purpose as well as life and death are raised.



Teachers will not be able to provide easy answers to questions that have been asked throughout the years and for which each faith has its answers. However they will need to manage discussions and debate where pupils will affirm their own answers, agree, disagree or question the answers of others or express their anxieties over not having answers that make sense to them.

Some students will experience periods of crisis and loss during their school lives; we have tried to ensure that our scheme of work in RE encourages the development of an environment and a vocabulary where students can share, and be supported through, times of great difficulty.

We, as teachers, can also learn much from the children and by recognising this, we will continue to grow spiritually, morally, culturally and mentally too, as pilgrims travelling alongside the children in our journeys through Faith and life together.

We hope that the seeds we sow through the experiences, insights, information and memories which our children gain from Religious Education at our school will take root, germinate and grow strong, and that they will remain with the children into adulthood, continually informing, shaping, developing and enriching the whole of their lives.

### **Consultation and Participation**

The policy has recently undergone a comprehensive and rigorous review and rewrite. Following Committee B governor approval, the Policy will undergo a period of consultation for parents before being formally adopted by the full governing body.

### **Monitoring and Review**

All staff will then review this policy once every year as well as responding to trends that suggest the need for earlier review.

Policy last reviewed by:

Name: **Mrs Tina Thomas, RE Subject Leader**

Date: **September 2017**

Suggested Date of Next review (Annually): **September 2018**

Appendix 1

St Mary's CE Primary School, Putney

Curriculum Map for the New Diocesan Syllabus for Religious Education.

September 2017

	Autumn Term 1	Autumn Term 2		Spring Term 1	Spring Term 2		Summer Term 1	Summer Term 2
<b>Found ation</b>	Who made this wonderful World?	Why is Christmas Special for Christians?		Who Cares for this Special World?	What is so Special About Easter?		How did Jesus Rescue People?	Why do Christians Believe that Jesus is Special?
<b>Year 1</b>	What is it like to live as a Jew?	Why are they having a Jewish party?	Which Nativity character are you?	Why do Christians make and keep promises before God?	Who is the saint of our school?	Why is Easter the most important festival?	Why did Jesus teach the Lord's Prayer as the way to pray?	What is the story of Noah really about?
<b>Year 2</b>	What does it mean to be a Hindu?	What is the importance of symbols, beliefs and teaching in Hinduism?	Where is the Light of Christmas ?	Why are Saints important to Christianity?	What are God's Rules for Living?	How do Easter symbols help us understand Easter's true meaning?	What responsibility had God given us to take care of Creation?	Why is it Good to Listen to and Remember the Stories Jesus Told?
<b>Year 3</b>	What is the Bible's big story?	What makes a Christian?	How do Advent and Epiphany show what Christmas is really about?	Who is Jesus?	What are the Beatitudes ?	Easter People	What does it mean to be a Muslim?	How and Why do Muslims uphold their faith by giving commitment to Allah?
<b>Year 4</b>	How did belief in God affect the actions of People from the Old Testament?	Why is Remembrance important?	Is Peace the most important message of Christmas ?	What does it mean to be a Jew?	Should every Christian go on a pilgrimage ?	How does Holy Communion build a Christian Community?	What do the Miracles of Jesus teach?	Contemporary Anglican Church
<b>Year 5</b>	Understanding Faith	What can be learnt from Wisdom?	Christmas through Art and Music	How has the Christian message survived for 2000 years?	Do Fame and Christian Faith Go Together?	Salvation: What happens in churches during Lent and Easter?	What does it mean to be a Sikh?	What do Sikhs believe?
<b>Year 6</b>	The Journey of Life and Death	How do Christians believe that following Jesus' New Commandment makes a difference?	How would Christians advertise Christmas ?	What is Buddhism?	What does it mean to be a Buddhist?	How does the Christian Festival of Easter offer Hope?	Liturgy	Bridging Unit: Who Decides? - Rules and Responsibilities