Religious Education Policy

‘Loving to Learn, Learning to Love’

Last Reviewed: March 2017

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Introduction

At St. Mark’s CE (A) Primary school, Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in defining the school’s distinctive Christian character. The subject is central to the school’s understanding of education and mission, and the commitment that ‘the Church at national, diocesan and local level is called to work towards every child and young person having a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ’ (Going for Growth Report) As a school we recognise that spiritual development lies at the heart of the curriculum. All members of the school community should experience Christianity through the life of the school, as well as through the taught curriculum.

The Church of England sets out a framework for education in the document, *Church of England Vision for Education Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good (July 2016)*

This framework is rooted in four basic elements:

- **Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills:** enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.

- **Educating for hope and aspiration:** enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely with things and people going wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.

- **Educating for community and living well together:** a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.

- **Educating for dignity and respect:** the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.

[www.churchofengland.org/education](http://www.churchofengland.org/education)

RE teaching at this school will be in line with the recommendations of the Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools, published by the National Society and adopted by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education (2012). Christianity will, therefore, be the majority study in RE as understanding Christianity as a living religion is the foundation of Religious Education in church schools. It is important that this draws on the richness and diversity of Christian experience in the breadth of its Anglican and other denominational forms, and in the variety of worldwide forms. The encounter must be an open one which stems from and instils respect for different views and interpretations and in which real dialogue and education takes place.

Church schools have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and world views. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also be able to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own beliefs and practices. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice.

RE teaching also follows the legal requirements of the Education Reform Act (1988), which places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement of all pupils.
**Right of withdrawal**

The school recognises the right of withdrawal of teachers. Any parent has the right to ask for his child to be excused religious education or worship, but before exercising that right, parents are asked to discuss, with the Executive Head Teacher or Head of School, the full implications of withdrawal from this most important area of the curriculum.

**Aims**

**The aims of Religious Education in our school are:**

To offer a full and positive presentation of living Christianity in an opportunity for encountering the Christian life in Anglican and other contexts, and to enable pupils to encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today

- To enable pupils to learn about other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents

- To develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth, and so to consider important human questions, values and concerns.

- To contribute to the development of pupils’ own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs

To contribute to the promotion of fundamental British values in particular:-

- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour; and

**Time Allocation**

At least 5% of RE curriculum time will be dedicated to meeting explicitly RE objectives. This usually equates to 1 hr per week at K.S.1 and 1 hr 15 mins per week at K.S.2 although the subject may be taught across the curriculum when appropriate.

As an Aided Church of England school, Christianity will play a prominent part in our teaching. Within this teaching allocation at least two thirds of subject content will be allocated to an exploration of the Christian faith, and the concepts, beliefs, teachings and practices that lie at its heart but account will be taken of the practices of other faiths and particularly those represented in the school and local community.

**Planning**

The school bases its RE provision on ‘Understanding Christianity’ and also the Stoke on Trent Agreed Syllabus. See Long-term Plan. Medium-term plans have been developed from these two resources. Short Term planning will reflect the needs of all children and be differentiated.
Teaching and Learning

Every class teacher will teach R.E. Sensitivity is paramount in the teaching of this subject.

Teachers may share personal convictions but this will not take precedence over their professional role. Teachers and children will explore new ground together.

A wide variety of methods will be employed.

- An atmosphere which stimulates enquiry will be provided.
- Children will be allowed to question things and to express themselves with confidence.
- Children will be presented with challenging tasks.
- Children will have the opportunity to investigate the religious belief and practice of the Christian faith and aspects of other world religions, including Islam and Hinduism.

Teachers will make use of visits, drama, film and multi-media, discussion, story-telling, display, posters, artefacts, visits to places of worship and visiting speakers from various faith communities whenever appropriate. All visits will be checked against the requirements specified in the educational visits procedure.

The outcomes for pupils at the end of their time in our school are that they are able to:

- Compare and contrast the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied and show how they are connected to believers’ lives
- Describe different aspects of belonging to a religion – symbol, story, festival, belief, faith in action, ritual, worship
- Express religious beliefs and ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology and describe what they mean
- Ask questions sensitively about the lives of believers and suggest appropriate answers
- Reflect on the decisions people make – including believers – and suggest possible outcomes
- Compare their own experience and identity with others – including believers
- Reflect and empathise with the big questions of life, suggesting some answers / insights
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth
- Value the religious journey of faith
- Develop pupils’ ability to interpret and appreciate religious imagery and expression

In addition, the subject contributes to other areas of education and human experience and plays an important part of the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

**Spiritual** - widening pupils vision of themselves and their own experience, within the context of a growing awareness and understanding of God.

**Moral** - helping each pupil develop their own informed values.

**Social** - helping pupils understand some major forces shaping the values in our society.

**Cultural** - aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and in developing positive attitudes towards diversity.
Additional links will be found across the curriculum especially with PSHE. RE can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and ensure the well-being of all pupils.

Assessment

Assessment will be based on teachers’ professional judgement of classroom work. Assessment for learning will take place during each lesson and inform planning. Summative assessment should take place at the end of each unit of work, usually half termly. Staff will report verbally to parents on pupil progress during parent consultation evenings and in writing each Summer Term.

Inclusion

R.E. will be taught with reference to the needs of all groups of children and the specific needs of individual children as appropriate. These include those with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities, the more able and talented and those in the early stages of learning English.

Equal Opportunity

In the teaching of R.E. we will ensure that all pupils are given access to the full range of experiences.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring will follow the school policy and timetable.

Management

RE is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects. As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE.

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Producing a scheme of work for the school
- Supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision
- Ensuring Religious Education has status within the school
- Keeping in touch with subject developments and disseminating information as appropriate
- Auditing and recording current resources, supplementing resource provision when money is available and disseminating this information to staff
- Undertaking personal development and subject training and ensuring provision for staff INSET
- Monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes
- Ensuring assessment strategies are in place in line with the Agreed Syllabus
- Creating the RE Development Plan and ensuring its regular review
- Accountability for RE standards in the school
- Meeting with member of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible

Implementation

The R.E. Leader, under the guidance of the Executive Head Teacher and Head of School, will ensure that all staff implement the policy.
The R.E. Leader will report back to the Executive Head Teacher, Head of School, Governing Body and SLT. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed__________________  Date ________________