

'Loving to Learn, Learning to Love'



Religious Education Policy

Last Approved: March 2020
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Rationale for R.E. at St. Mark's CE Primary School

Religious Education (R.E.) plays an important role in defining the school's distinctive Christian character. The SIAMS schedule 2018 (Strand 7) makes it clear that R.E. should reflect the school's Christian vision. The subject is regarded as a core subject within the school's curriculum. It has a vital role in developing religious literacy and deepening pupils understanding of Christianity, in all its forms, and fostering appreciation and understanding of other faith traditions. R.E. is non-confessional and should be treated as an academic subject in its own right.

As the Church of England document, '**Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014**' recommends that the R.E. curriculum in all schools should,

".....ensure it provides a more coherent, progressive and challenging approach to the teaching of Christianity within the context of the wider exploration of the diversity of religion and belief in the modern world"

".....explore ways of extending pupils' ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry as part of their learning in R.E."

R.E. Statement of Entitlement

R.E. teaching at this school will be in line with the recommendations of the **Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools**, published by the Church of England Education Office (June 2016), see link below:

https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1384868/re_statement_of_entitlement_2016.pdf

Christianity will, therefore, be no less than two thirds of R.E. curriculum time. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of R.E. in this Church of England school. However, as a Church school we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also learn to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own ideas and beliefs. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice and discrimination.

The R.E. curriculum

R.E. teaching also follows the legal requirements of the Education Reform Act (1988), which places R.E. as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement for all pupils. The school bases its R.E. provision on the decision made by the governing body, using the Lichfield Diocesan R.E. Guidelines, Understanding Christianity resources and other

appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning including the Stoke on Trent Locally Agreed Syllabus.

At least 5% of curriculum time will be dedicated to meeting explicitly R.E. objectives, although the subject may be taught across the curriculum when appropriate. 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.

The aims of Religious Education in our school are:

- To help pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with text.
- To help pupils consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide.
- To enable all pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions and world views and their impact on society and culture.
- To give pupils a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- To help pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of religious texts and teachings and understanding their impact on the lives of believers.
- To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief, of themselves, the world and human experience.
- 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 nurture understanding, respect and open-mindedness and inspire lifelong engagement with the study of religions and beliefs.

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, and 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.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

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 (SMSC) 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 of our society
Cultural	aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

Additional links will be found across the curriculum especially with **personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)** and **British values**. R.E. can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and ensure the well-being of all pupils.

The management of R.E.

R.E. is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in R.E. should equal or be better than comparable subjects. Teachers should share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development (SIAMS 2018).

As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in R.E.

The R.E. subject leader is responsible for:

- producing a scheme of work for the school.
- supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of R.E. 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 R.E. provision, practice and outcomes.
- ensuring rigorous systems of assessment are in place (SIAMS 2018) and are in line with the Local Agreed Syllabus.
- creating the R.E. Development Plan and ensuring its regular review.
- accountability for R.E. standards in the school.
- meet with member of the Diocesan R.E. advisory team when possible.

R.E. outcomes for pupils

The following are suggested outcomes for pupils at the end of their secondary education in church schools. Middle and secondary schools should draw on these to add to their objectives.

In R.E. pupils will be encouraged / have opportunities to:

- Think theologically and explore ultimate questions.
- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Develop the skills to analyse, interpret and apply the Bible text.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Recognise that faith is a particular way of understanding and responding to God and the world.
- Analyse and explain the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Reflect sensitively on areas of shared belief and practice between different faiths.
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.
- Express religious ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology.
- Be confident in expressing and nurturing their own faith journey.

Right to withdrawal - see appendix

At St. Mark's CE Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the Executive Headteacher who will then invite the parents into school to discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the R.E. and worship provided by the school and set out the options open to the parents as set out in education law. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects.

Current R.E. practice and principles

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.

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 Opportunities

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 and may include lesson observations, book scrutiny and pupil discussions.

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.

Approved and signed off by

Executive Headteacher:

CO-Chair of Local Governing body:

Date:

Appendix

Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education March 2017

Religious Education

The government guidance *Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* states that:

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (R.E., sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for R.E. for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those who withdraw by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over)

In voluntary controlled schools and academies, religious education must be provided in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus provided by the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) of the local authority in which the school is situated.

In voluntary aided schools and academies, the decision on the content of religious education rests with the Governing Body, and should be in line with the Trust Deeds of the school.

In all forms of church school, the religious education provided should contribute to the Christian character of the school, and this is in aspect of the school's work which is subject to the ***Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)***, whether VC, VA or academy.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, ***the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. (Non-statutory Guidance 2010)***

Any parent considering withdrawal must contact the Headteacher / Principal to discuss any concerns relating to the policy, provision and practice of religious education at the school.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

It is important that the school makes clear on its website and through other forms of communication, the R.E. syllabus being taught in school. There needs to be a clear understanding of the relevance of the R.E. curriculum and how it respects pupils own beliefs. It is good practice to review requests to withdraw from R.E. and collective worship annually.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Whether the parents wish their children to be withdrawn from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it.
- Parents can withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship, and not withdraw their child from the remainder of the R.E.
- Where pupils are withdrawn from R.E. or collective worship, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or incur extra cost.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn from R.E., the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for R.E. of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This could be provided at the school or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable R.E. is provided. Outside arrangements are permitted providing the necessary safeguarding procedures are in place and the LA or Trust Board is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from withdrawal will only affect the start or end of a school session (***Non-statutory Guidance 2010***)

It is important that schools are fully aware of issues surrounding religion, race and culture and ensure that parental right to withdrawal requests to not hamper their responsibilities to ensure equality for all and the promotion of British Values.