

St Mary's Bryanston Square CE Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Our School Vision Statement

Excellence with compassion

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. And love your neighbour as yourself.'

Our school vision is based upon Mark 12:30-31

1. Introduction

At St. Mary's Bryanston Square, we place children at the centre of everything we do and are committed to providing the highest quality education for them. *"Our vision embraces the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework."* (Church of England Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good.) Our school offers a distinctly Christian education in an inclusive environment, treating everyone with dignity and welcoming children and staff of all faiths and none. We care deeply for those around us, treating everyone with love, kindness and compassion.

This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils in developing a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education (RE) and is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, follows the EYFS Framework 2021, the National Curriculum 2014, and the school's theologically rooted vision and associated Christian values. Through the teaching of Religious Education and the power of our love, we address children's understanding of themselves and of others, to enable them to flourish and to prepare them for life in an ever-changing world.

As a Church of England school, we celebrate faith and have the following core aims:

A. to nurture pupils' spiritual development so that children:

- develop a secure sense of identity and belonging
- engage with questions of meaning and purpose in life
- explore the feelings, behaviour, life choices and difficulties they encounter
- gain a deep understanding of God and the role faith plays in life
- have opportunities for awe, wonder and mystery

B. to develop pupils' religious literacy so that children:

- are prepared for life as citizens in a multi-faith society
- understand what the core teachings and practices of Christianity and other principal religions/ world views represented in Great Britain are, and what they are not
- can interact respectfully with people of all faiths or world views, whilst retaining an understanding of the distinctive nature of their own and others' beliefs
- can explore issues within and between faiths to help them understand different religions, beliefs, values and traditions
- understand how people's religious or non-religious beliefs impact on individuals, societies, communities and cultures

C. to secure a deep theological understanding of the Christian faith of the school as understood by St Mary's Bryanston Square Church, and the practices of the Church of England, so that children:

- know what Christians believe about God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the difference He makes to the lives of believers
- have a good knowledge of the Bible and can make links between Biblical texts and behaviour
- know that there are special times in the Church's year, and particular practices which help Christians worship and live out their faith
- understand their intrinsic value as made in the image of God, and the value of others who they should 'love as themselves'

D. **to make learning from and about religions enjoyable and interesting**, so that children:

- form positive attitudes about the practice of faith
- see reflection and thinking deeply about themselves and their lives as a meaningful activity, which supports their mental health and emotional well-being
- love learning, and develop the curiosity to keep learning beyond St Mary's school
- non-religious beliefs impact on individuals, societies, communities and cultures

Christian Values in Religious Education

Our 6 core Christian Values have been agreed through discussion with the whole school community, and are designed to include the whole school community, whilst also remaining distinctively Christian. This is shown in the way they are underpinned by Biblical texts, which are reinforced through Worship, displays and celebrations of children's behaviour. It is expected that teachers will make reference to these when teaching Religious Education as appropriate. We study each value *in depth* half-termly through Collective Worship.

- Curiosity - 'Let the wise listen and add to their learning.' Proverbs 1:5
- Love - 'Now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Respect - "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." Luke 6:31
- Forgiveness - "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Matthew 6:4
- Honesty - 'Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.' Philippians 4:8
- Feeling Safe - 'They will live safely, and no one will make them afraid.' Ezekiel 34:28

In teaching RE, we follow the London Diocesan Board for School's Religious Education Syllabus.

1. What is RE?

RE is a core academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas. Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in church schools are:

- 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 worldviews 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.

3. Curriculum balance and time

Reflecting the school's trust deed and funding agreement, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in Keystages 1 and 2.

Our school timetables Religious education as a discrete subject lesson once per week, for at least one hour for every KS1 and KS2 class.

See Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills in Appendix 1

See Curriculum Map in Appendix 2 for overview

4. Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that religious education be taught to all pupils. In voluntary aided schools, the Governing body is responsible for the syllabus for RE. It is the Governors' responsibility to ensure that RE is provided for all pupils in accordance with the trust deeds. Where these are missing, the religious education provided should be in harmony with the teachings and practices of the Church of England.

As a Church of England School, we see Religious Education as a crucial element of promoting the community cohesion we value so highly, and it is our aim that all the children in our care will participate in the RE lessons we provide. However, we do appreciate that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education, including trips, and we respect that right. We would always ask parents with a concern in this area to discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

5. How we teach RE:

RE is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the national curriculum and the school's theologically rooted vision.

6. The intent of the LDBS syllabus:

- to enable all children to become religiously literate;
- to ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness - vision for Education (Church of England);
- to offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
 - i. Ability to be critical thinkers;
 - ii. Ability to engage critically with texts;
 - iii. Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions;
 - iv. Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews; a
 - v. Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/ or philosophical convictions;
 - vi. Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.

To offer units of learning that:

- are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content; offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences;
- offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children;
- provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own.

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- the Christian vision of the school;
- contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children; takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools Statement of Entitlement;
- The Church of England's vision for Education – every person deserves to live a 'life in all its fullness.'

7. Implementation of the LDBS syllabus:

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

Enquire: Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, Philosophy or Human/ Social Science.

Investigate/ Explore: What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to 'deepen' learning:

- interpreting and analysing sacred texts;
- using challenging and controversial questions;
- extended pieces of writing
- discussion which continually asks, "Have we gone through enough yet?"
- children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc.);
- grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues.

Evaluate/Communicate:

What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/ practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

Reflect on/Express:

What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

8. Religious Education at each stage

Early Years Foundation Stage

Both the Nursery and Reception classes now use the London Diocesan Board for Schools syllabus, which enables children to explore RE concepts through play and storytelling. Children in Early Years have one taught RE lesson per week. This is teacher-led whole class teaching and small group teaching involving stories, discussion, role-play and song. Teachers also plan RE teaching into the continuous provision for children to engage with and build on whole-class teaching. Focus is also around the children themselves: who they are, who is special to them and the families and communities they belong to. They develop their sense of responsibility and membership of a community, understand that some places are special to members of their community and recognise that people have different beliefs, celebrating special times in different ways.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

A range of teaching and learning strategies are used to deliver the Key Stages 1 and 2 RE Curriculum and the EYFS Areas of Learning most relevant to RE (Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World).

These might include written tasks, the study of religious texts, engaging with Scripture and stories, reflection; drama activities including role play and hot-seating; exploring religious artefacts, use of floor-books/portfolios (which serve as a useful record of each class' extended learning journey in RE over the course of a year) prayer writing; 2D and 3D artwork, other practical activities, cross-curricular activities utilising ICT; discussion in a variety of contexts, including partner talk, along with visitors, trips and visits,

Religious Education in Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children:

- have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level.
- children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview;
- children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life;
- they will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own;
- some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will:

- be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level;
- able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary;

- have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believer's life.
- We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two;
- to be able to express and justify their own views with confidence;
 - to be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts;
 - to be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

9. Access to the curriculum

We recognise, through our adaptive planning system, that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts, knowledge, and to flourish. All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

10. Impact of the LDBS syllabus

- Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews (Religious literacy);
- Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points as a result of a rich and engaging RE curriculum;
- Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions;
- Children will be able to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices;
- Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness.

11. Environment and Resources

RE 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 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 world views as appropriate.

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which RE can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking.

We plan and organise the environment, with a range of tasks and activities that are adapted accordingly, to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of development and learning need.

We promote both independent and collaborative working. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum.

We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts. We value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors. We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with our parish and work collaboratively with the church and wider community.

RE Displays

Every class should have an RE display. The elements are consistent in every class. These include:

- the Big Question for the RE unit being studied
- the weekly lesson questions added as the unit builds up Key religious vocabulary with images
- children's questions and reflections
- the big story (Christian concepts) 'timeline' with an arrow pointing to the concept being studied

12. Planning, assessment, recording, monitoring and evaluation

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is 2/3 Christian and 1/3 other major world faiths.

i. Expectations

High expectations for all pupils to have access to a high quality, stimulating RE curriculum, so that they can make 'good' to 'outstanding' progress from their starting points.

ii. Planning

At St. Mary's, we have an RE programme that:

- takes into account the religious and educational needs of our children;
- respects and promotes the child's innate capacity for wonder, awe, reverence, indignation – for the 'spiritual'
- provides opportunities for celebration, prayer and reflection in implicit and explicit ways;
- provides children with the language of religious experience - a 'literacy' in religious activities, places, stories, symbols and rituals, people and objects;
- presents a 'systematic' presentation of the Christian events, message and way of life, in ways appropriate to the age and development of the child.
- requires the adults involved to understand the underlying theological as well as educational principles. Each LDBS unit begins with an in-depth background knowledge section for teachers to enable all staff to deliver the RE curriculum confidently.

Appendix 1, the LDBS model curriculum map is followed. Using this, teachers plan and deliver weekly RE lessons. In addition to the weekly lesson, learning may also take place through trips, visiting speakers and other enrichment opportunities.

Although units vary in length from four to six weeks, each one is based around a 'big question', which is introduced at the beginning of the topic and returned to regularly. Every lesson in the unit

focuses on a further 'weekly question', each of these contributing to the development of the children's understanding of the unit as a whole. To enable the children to 'know more and remember

more', emphasis is placed on the journey through the sequence of lessons, with time spent at the beginning of each revisiting prior learning. This helps to create a deep and lasting understanding.

As in all subjects, differentiation is an important part of the planning process and is utilised to allow all children to access the learning, regardless of their ability or knowledge of the English language. The careful planning of key questions, the explicit teaching of religious vocabulary and the creation of a 'wow factor' also play a role in creating engaging, challenging and effective RE lessons. In each lesson, time is given for pupil reflection. This enables children to engage with their own and others' beliefs and values, as well as questions of meaning and purpose. Children are encouraged to ask questions, make links and discuss what they wonder about or find thought-provoking. Reflection is also an important part of the planning cycle and teachers are encouraged to review the lessons as they are taught, noting anything that will have an impact on subsequent sessions.

Each RE unit has an individual unit plan. It outlines the following:

- The unit title and the 'Big Questions' which will be covered
- The faith, year group and prior learning for the unit
- The core concepts focused on
- Key RE vocabulary
- A breakdown of the learning intentions for the unit
- Opportunities for cross-curricular links
- Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social developments
- Sensitivities to be aware of when delivering the unit
- Possible further thinking and extension activities
- Suggestions of places to visit

Formative Assessment is ongoing in all RE lessons, through differentiated questioning. Teachers make summative assessments at HT2, HT4 and HT6.

In the Nursery and Reception classes the Early Years Profile is used as a means of recording significant achievement in relation to the EYFS Curriculum. Assessment is through the areas of UTW and PSED in the EYFS profile.

The assessments for Years 1-6 (Appendix 2) are based upon the LDBS assessment guidance, assessing directly what pupils have been taught in RE. Assessment statements set out the Expected Standard of substantive and disciplinary knowledge that children should know and remember by the end of the year.

Children working at Greater Depth Within Expected Standard will be working with increasing accuracy and detail. They will be working more independently than children working at Expected Standard. Their explanations will show that their thinking is at a deeper level than children working at Expected Standard.

The Lead RE checkpoints pupils' progress three times a year, aims to meet with teachers at least twice a year to discuss and moderate assessments in RE. A cohort tracker is maintained to follow pupils throughout their school journey.

Teachers should use assessments to conduct a gap analysis to see which areas the children are weaker in, so that they can plan accordingly. It is important to note that RE is unlike any other subject; *what* we are assessing is not just content, knowledge or skills, but the children's ability to apply what they have learnt to their own lives and their on-going spiritual development. Assessment systems are a tool to underpin this, but examples of children's work, displays and conversations with

pupils are just as valid. Teachers are encouraged to use post-it notes to capture pupils' responses to RE, as these are often 'in the moment' and not at convenient assessment times!

Progress is tracked through the school by SLT using both pupil data, and the qualitative evidence from books and reflections, to ensure that standards are high.

13. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in the following way:

- support is provided by the RE leader, including team-teaching and through LDBS advice for those teachers needing help with the planning and delivery of RE.
- the RE leader is responsible each term for visiting RE lessons and monitoring work in the RE books against the units of work to ensure effective coverage.
- a coaching approach is used for professional development of teachers where specific feedback will be provided to each teacher after monitoring and coaching by the RE leader in how to implement any improvements identified. This is then reviewed by the RE leader as part of the continual monitoring and evaluation cycle.

14. Impact

RE is monitored as part of the school's yearly monitoring cycle to ensure high quality teaching and learning. Where possible, staff are involved in this process so it is developmental, not critical. Eg Work scrutiny in INSET meetings, for staff to learn from each other's practice.

Scheduled monitoring is as follows:

- **Medium term (half-termly) planning is monitored by:** SLT
- **Weekly planning is monitored by:** RE Subject Leader and SLT as part of SLT monitoring schedule
- **Children's books are monitored:** termly by the RE Subject Leader + additional checks by SLT according to monitoring schedule
- **Quality of teaching is monitored by Learning Walks and Lesson observations by:** SLT/ RE Subject Leader / RE Governor/ LDBS

15. Continued professional development:

The RE leader attends regular training with the LDBS and will then take responsibility for planning and leading staff development sessions and providing CPD support to individual members of staff. The LDBS syllabus is accessible on the school network. Additional resources to support planning, teaching and learning are located in topic resource boxes (located centrally in the school).

16. Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will:

- ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education.
- ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- to keep up to date with developments in the area of Religious Education through reading, attending LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools.
- to monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching and assessment of Religious Education across the school in collaboration with the leadership team.
- to support staff in the teaching of Religious Education across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation.
- to lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards.

- to plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective Religious Education teaching.
- to work closely with the senior leadership team to identify CPD needs of individuals, teams and the whole school.
- to regularly review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document.
- 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.

17. Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help children flourish. At the start of the academic year, the school uploads each year group's Curriculum Map, which includes the year's RE units of teaching. Volunteer parents accompany classes on re enrichment trips and are invited into share their faith knowledge and experiences. Pupils' learning in RE is reported at the end of the year in the annual report to parents.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/ WITHDRAWAL

- Teachers should be aware of the different religious and faith groups represented in their class. This is a key strength of our school and can be an invaluable resource for teaching. In all discussions about faith and religion, we always speak respectfully, whilst recognising that there are differences in what different children (and staff) believe.
- This is a subject to which children can respond with knowledge and interest, even when they have newly arrived in the country with little or no English. Visual and hands-on activities as well as art, music and drama can be very helpful to support EAL children with their spiritual development and understanding of faith.
- Religious Education is a subject which is especially important for children with Special Educational Needs, as it directly addresses issues such as equal opportunities and self esteem, and invites personal responses. In this subject, success should be genuinely independent from attainment in formal curriculum skills.

As a Church of England School, we see Religious Education as a crucial element of promoting the community cohesion we value so highly, and it is our aim that all the children in our care will participate in the RE lessons we provide. However, we do appreciate that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education, including trips, and we respect that right. We would always ask parents with a concern in this area to discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

Reviewed
Approved by ACV Committee on
To be reviewed

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RE Subject Leader: Jacqueline Schroer
Responsible Governor: Revd Matt Coombs
Responsible Committee: Achievement, Community and Values