

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



ST MARY'S LEWISHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

OUR VISION

To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).

MISSION STATEMENT

St Mary's school serves our community by providing the highest quality of education and experiences so everyone can achieve their full potential. Faith is at the heart of our life together which celebrates our diversity. Christian values unite and guide our relationships based on respect, responsibility and forgiveness.

Religious Education supports us in our mission to lead positive, happy and successful lives. RE promotes our aim to nurture a Christian community, whilst also celebrating and respecting the variety of cultures, faiths and beliefs represented in our school and local community. It teaches us how prayer and reflection can help us as we strive to reach our potential. RE also provides us with the opportunity to reflect more deeply on the meaning and significance of faith. It will link with the Christian values of the school. RE will support our children to grow up to live and learn in a respectful society that respects the rights of everyone to their own beliefs, challenges stereotypes and builds a cohesive and inclusive community. It is carried out in accordance with our Trust Deed.

AIMS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In Religious Education at St Mary's School we aim that pupils will:-

- Develop a knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and the Anglican tradition and its impact on our local community, and on our society today. This will be supported through a study of: Creation, Prayer and Worship, the Life and Teachings of Jesus, Old Testament Characters, Living out the Faith and Christian Festivals.
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of some of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain and our local community today.
- Develop skills and attitudes which will support their personal, moral, social and cultural development, so that they can make informed responses to life issues and moral choices.
- Explore some questions of meaning, belief and faith and consider how the world's religions have responded to them, using their developing religious and theological literacy.
- Think about their own beliefs and values in the light of the beliefs of others, both religious and non-religious, and the values of the school community.
- Develop their reflection, deeper thinking, open-mindedness, investigating, interpreting, comparing, ability to listen to others, respect for others' feelings and opinions, ability to express their own feelings and opinions in a respectful discussion, empathy and questioning.

SCHEME OF WORK

St Mary's School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School. The Governors in consultation with the Head teacher have decided, following advice from the diocese, to adopt the Religious Education Units of Work for Southwark Diocesan VA church schools, and supplement this with additional plans and resources from a range of sources, as appropriate to the needs of the children in each class.

RE is taught in half-termly units, with some shorter units included as well. Each class will study a 4 week Christmas and a 4 week Easter unit each year. The RE curriculum map is designed to ensure a full coverage of learning about Christianity and other major world religions whilst ensuring progression over time, so that units build on prior learning. The school have decided, in line with SDBE guidance, to include the maximum of 1/3 of units covering other religions, with 2/3 of the curriculum units on Christianity. See Appendix 1 – curriculum map.

VISITS TO PLACES OF WORSHIP

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities. Such experiences help pupils to relate the beliefs and values about which they are learning to real people in the wider community and also give pupils an opportunity to see the importance of community expressions of faith at first hand. All visits are carried out in line with the school's educational visits policy. As well as regular visits to St Mary's Church for worship, each class is expected to visit the Church or Southwark Cathedral at least once a year as part of their RE curriculum.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Planning for RE is based on the two Attainment Targets in the Agreed Syllabus:

AT1. Learning about Religions

AT2. Learning from Religions

Learning about religion includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion, its key beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life, their impact on the lives of believers and communities, and the varying ways in which these are expressed. It also includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own experiences and their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including whole class teaching, group, paired and individual learning, delivered through art, ICT, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection. Teachers are encouraged to develop cross-curricular links in their planning. Teachers plan for all children as unique learners in line with the school inclusion policy, whilst reflecting the special nature of RE as a subject and the inclusive opportunities that this offers.

RECORDING, MARKING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

At the end of each unit of learning the class teachers complete a whole class assessment grid, identifying those pupils operating at, above or below expected levels. Separate judgements are made for AT1 and AT2, recognising that children may respond differently to these two strands. Reference is made to the Non-statutory National Framework for Religious Education, 2004 – 'I Can' Attainment Statements and the old National Curriculum levels provide a guide as to the age related expectations. The assessment is used by

the class teacher to ensure that each pupil is set work that is appropriately challenging and supported, and by the coordinator to track pupil progress through the school. Overall achievement in RE is reported at the end of the academic year.

Children in KS1 and KS2 have individual RE books. Any values work in addition to the RE curriculum is recorded in the children's learning books. All class teachers maintain RE class assessment books. These books contain representative samples of unit learning for learners working at, above or below expected levels. Moderation sessions, both in school and with other local schools will ensure that teacher's assessment judgements are appropriately reviewed, reflected upon and moderated to ensure consistency.

MANAGEMENT, CPD AND MONITORING

The teaching, assessing and resourcing of Religious Education is managed by the RE curriculum leader, in close collaboration with the Head teacher, Extended leadership team and School governors. A Faith Group made up of members from the School Governing Body (including the incumbent at St Mary's Church) and the Senior leadership team meet every term. There is also a children's Faith Group made up of 2 children from each KS2 class who coordinate the children's reflections and suggestions for developing RE at St Mary's.

The curriculum leader attends regular training and professional development, and organises INSET and training for other members of staff when necessary.

RE planning, class assessment books and children's books are monitored termly, and the scheme of work is evaluated annually. Resources are stored in a central place for use by all staff. Links to online resource are included within the SDBE unit plans.

Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects.

TIMETABLE / ORGANISATION

As RE in a Faith school is a core subject, it is expected that RE is taught by the class teacher wherever possible. A minimum of 5% of teaching time must be dedicated to RE which equates to 1.25 hours a week, however the aim should be close to 10%. RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for Collective Worship. In the EYFS, RE learning will be integrated within the daily provision with at least one whole class session or focus activity directly linked to RE planned each week. RE lessons contribute to the spiritual development of pupils which is a very important part of the education provided by a Church school.

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Displays in class include key vocabulary, questions, children's responses and reflections and artefacts where appropriate.

THE RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM RE

At St Mary's school we wish to be an inclusive community but recognize that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. The value of RE and daily worship is discussed with parents at induction and we remind parents that all of the SDBE RE units have been reviewed by Faith leaders from a variety of faiths. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at St Mary's School.