

Religious Education Policy

Christian Vision of St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Growing together through faith in Jesus Christ '**Let all you do be done in love**' (1 Corinthians 16.14).

Knowing God through Jesus in our lives let us share, experience and live happiness, laughter and joy in a welcoming, inclusive and loving Christian place.

In the eyes of God and with all your heart let us embrace opportunities to learn, achieve and celebrate success and difference.

By sharing the fruits of the spirit let us shine out for others to see that we are tolerant, respectful, wise and hopeful in this community and God's world.

In journey and love, remember '**I am with you always**' (Matthew 28.20)

We feel that this statement sums up succinctly what we wish to achieve at St Thomas' for our school community.

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of **light**". (Matthew 6:22)

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Religious Education at St Thomas' Church Of England Aided Primary School.

The spiritual and moral development of our children underpins all aspects of our school life.

The importance of Religious Education at our school

At the heart of RE at St Thomas' is the teaching of Christianity, rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In our school pupils and their families can expect a religious education curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith: for example through the Understanding Christianity resource.

As an inclusive community, we also encourage learning about other religions and world views fostering respect for them. We aim to provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

RE has a very high profile within our school curriculum and learning activities aim to provide fully for the needs of all learners. We aim to inspire learners through the effective teaching of RE and develop a wide range of higher level skills such as **enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection** to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world. We aim to use some form of enquiry based approach that engages with, for example biblical text, and helps develop religious and theological literacy. Links with the Christian values of the school and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are intrinsic to the RE curriculum and should have a significant impact on learners.

Attainment should be high and progress significant in developing an understanding of Christianity and a broad range of religions and world views. RE is a core subject at our school.

The effectiveness of denominational education in Church of England schools is evaluated during the statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection. The Evaluation Schedule assesses the way RE contributes to a church school's Christian character. It highlights the responsibility of church school leaders to support and resource RE, and those teaching it. In voluntary aided schools such as St Thomas' a judgement on standards in teaching and learning in RE is included in the SIAMS report. This judgement is made against the expectations set out in this document.

Legal Requirements, Curriculum balance and time

St Thomas' CE Primary School is a Church of England Aided School, therefore Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Trust Deed and will reflect the rites, practices and beliefs of the Church of England. The governing body is responsible for the subject in the school. This is delegated to the head teacher and the Religious Education subject leader on a daily basis.

At St Thomas' CE Primary School:

- Christianity receives at least 2/3rds of the allocated RE teaching time
- Dedicated curriculum time, explicitly meeting RE objectives, however organised aims to be close to 10% but will never be less than 5%.
- It should be noted that the RE entitlement is totally separate from the requirements for Collective Worship.

Aims

1. The aims of Religious Education at St Thomas' are:
 - To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
 - To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
 - To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.
2. At St Thomas' the expectation is that all pupils at the end of their education and in an age appropriate way are religiously literate. As a minimum pupils are able to:
 - Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
 - Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.

Effective teaching and learning about Religions and World Views

3. At St Thomas' we aim to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views. This includes providing:
 - A challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework.

- An assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts.
- A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide.
- A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place.
- The opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Developing staff expertise

At St Thomas' RE is given comparable status with other core curriculum areas in terms of staffing and resourcing. We are committed to building up staff expertise in RE specifically but not exclusively. Our aim is to work towards:

- At least one staff member having specialist RE training or qualifications.
- All staff teaching RE having access to appropriate professional development.
- All teaching staff and governors having an understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within our school.
- A governing body which monitors standards in RE effectively.

Expected academic outcomes

Pupil's outcomes in RE will equal or be better than comparable subjects in our school.

The purpose of teaching Religious Education in school is to:

- Show children that Christianity is about following the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is relevant to their daily lives.
- Extend children's ability to reflect upon themselves as whole people, experiencing life through body, mind and spirit.
- Help pupils understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Help pupils understand that they are loved and valued by God as part of his creation.

'And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favour of God was upon him'. (Luke 2:40)

In KS1 and KS2 Religious Education will be taught as a discrete subject although the approach may vary. In Foundation Stage the teaching of Religious Education may be integrated in to more general topics with a thematic approach.

Opportunities for discussion, questioning and reflection are essential elements of the teaching of Religious Education at our school. Through the effective teaching of Religious Education we aim to pose and provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. We would also wish to encourage pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

Religious Education in school is organized using a whole school overview or plan. This lays out which themes should be studied by each year group on a half termly basis over each academic year.

Wherever possible, children should learn from primary source material as well as through the use of invited visitors with relevant experience and appropriate resources that support and clarify understanding for all pupils. Regular visits to St Thomas' Church and other places of worship are an integral aspect of the effective teaching of Religious Education at our school. Other curriculum opportunities may include art and drama workshops or visiting theatre companies.

Withdrawals

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum. In this event, the school will undertake responsibility for the supervision of withdrawn pupils with regard to health and safety and alternative work will be provided by the class teacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The head teacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation.
- The head teacher, in conjunction with the RE Co-ordinator and foundation governors will identify effective strategies to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- The head teacher and foundation governors will ensure that appropriate resources are allocated for resources, staff development and continuing professional development for all staff.
- The head teacher and the governing body will ensure that Religious Education is fully included in the School Improvement Plan.
- Foundation Governors will commit the appropriate time to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Foundation Governors will work within the parameters of the agreed visits protocol at all times.