

St Mary's C of E School

Religious Education policy



Date agreed:	March 2017
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Religious Education Policy

1. Rationale

As a Church of England School, we aim to provide children through our RE curriculum, with a thorough understanding of the life and work of Christ and His place in our daily lives.

In addition, through the adoption of the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus 2014, we deliver a broad R.E. curriculum that also develops a knowledge and understanding of four other principal religions in Great Britain to equip our children with a broad Religious Education relevant to 21st century Britain.

All children at St. Mary's have equal access to the R.E. curriculum irrespective of age, gender, race, ability, creed and culture.

At St Mary's it is our Mission to:

- Stimulate in every child a sense of curiosity and excitement about the world and to encourage them to search for truth, meaning and purpose in life.
- Educate pupils intellectually, socially, morally, aesthetically, physically and spiritually within a school based on the example of Jesus in the gospels.
- Show pastoral care, encouraging in pupils a sense of commitment, self-reliance, respect for others and a healthy self-esteem.
- Make prayer and worship real educational experiences.

2. Aims

We aim to achieve our mission by:

- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum within a diversity of learning environments and experiences that develops individual potential and rewards it.
- Providing a secure environment, physically and emotionally, in which all are offered equal opportunities and are taught to value their own skills and abilities and those of others.
- Teaching courtesy, good manners and consideration for others.
- Encouraging pupils to use initiative and to persevere in the face of changing personal circumstances or varied learning outcomes.
- Enabling children to communicate effectively with one another and to frame their own feelings, emotions and experiences in appropriate language, in order to support moral and spiritual development and engender respect for personal and religious values of others.

3. Aims and Purposes of R.E.

The aim of Religious Education is to help pupils to:

- Engage confidently, constructively and reflectively with beliefs, values and lifestyles in a religiously diverse world.

A pupil at St Mary's will have the opportunity to:

- Acquire knowledge and understanding of religions in Cornwall in the present day
- Acquire knowledge and understanding of how religious traditions have shaped the identity of Cornwall
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about issues arising from the study of religions
- Reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences as part of their study

4. Attitudes and Skills in R.E.

At St. Mary's, Religious Education makes a major contribution to children's learning through their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern are promoted via our PSHE Policy and through all areas of school life. Other important attitudes that are fostered include commitment, fairness, respect, self-understanding, enquiry and openness.

Important skills we seek to develop in RE include: investigation, interpretation, reflection, empathy, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, application, expression and collaboration.

Much of R.E. begins with children's own experiences and emphasises how special and unique they are as a starting point. The opportunities that are provided to develop the children's spirituality across the curriculum are highlighted on our whole school spirituality grids.

5. Responsibilities

Every class teacher plans their own RE lessons according to the scheme of work devised by the RE Co-ordinator.

The long term plan for RE ensures that the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met across the school. I

n the Foundation Stage the RE that is taught links with the Early Learning Goals. Although RE is not taught in our Pre-school, when appropriate children in the Pre-school will join in to some RE activities with the Reception class.

Medium Term RE plans are handed in half termly to the RE Leader who liaises regularly with the Head teacher. RE plans are moderated each term by the RE leader

6. Procedures and practise

RE is taught at St. Mary's for one and a half hours per week across the school.

Opportunities for cross curricular links are often created by linking RE with other subjects such as Literacy and Art.

At times RE themed days are held across the school. The aim of this is to provide the children with an in-depth study of a certain festival or theme at a given time, e.g. a “Festivals of Light” day held in the Autumn term or a Barnabas RE day.

The use of ICT is encouraged to enrich our RE lessons through using a variety of different software, the internet, DVD’s, I-pads and E-mail.

Our termly Eucharist services and special assemblies throughout the year, often providing an opportunity for classes to share their RE work and thoughts with parents. At different times in the school year, the children often work together with Penlee Cluster to produce on-line resources such as the animated Advent Calendar and the Daily Lent Shout. These are shared with the whole school so bring an extra dimension to the subject of RE.

7. Planning/Scheme of Work for R.E.

The Scheme of Work for RE details the units of work to be covered by each class.

Christianity is studied every year by all classes and constitutes the majority of the work that is 60% of the year.

The school uses the “Understanding Christianity” teaching resource to deliver most of the Christianity part of the RE curriculum. This involves the teaching of key Christian concepts being delivered in a spiral curriculum. Each unit of work has key knowledge building blocks to be taught and clear learning outcomes to ensure continuity and progression in the teaching and learning of Christianity across the school. In almost every year group there is a unit of work based on local Christianity in Penzance or the history of Christianity in Cornwall. This covers the Curriculum Kernewek section of the Agreed Syllabus.

Multi-faiths are studied for 40% of the year and the learning is taken from the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus. Clear learning outcomes for each unit of work ensures that the multi-faith is taught at the appropriate level for the children.

At Key Stage 1 the children learn about Hinduism.

At lower Key Stage 2 the children learn about Islam and Judaism and at upper Key Stage 2 the children explore Sikhism and Hinduism at a deeper level.

8. Resources

All resources are kept in classrooms. These resources include DVDs, teacher resource books, Children’s Bibles and multi-faith resources. The internet is regarded as a useful resource for RE especially interactive tours of places of worship which are too far to visit in person. Artefact boxes are borrowed regularly from Cornwall Library Service.

Visitors are invited into school where appropriate to enhance our teaching of RE. They are always met before hand to discuss the purpose and outcomes of the lesson and there is always a teacher present. Visits to different places of worship are encouraged in the local area including further afield to Truro Cathedral. Links have also recently been made to Dorkemyn, Cornwall’s faith forum.

Outdoor learning is also an important way to explore the RE curriculum. Trips outdoors are made to enhance the teaching and learning of RE, for example: Penlee remembrance garden, Paul spiritual garden, Gwennap Pit and St Michael’s Way pilgrim route.

9. Assessment

The Scheme of Work with key knowledge building blocks ensures that RE at St Mary's is coherent, progressive and identifies what pupils should know and understand by the end of each unit in the form of learning outcomes. It is clearly stated what a child should know and understand by the end of each year group. In this way a child can be assessed as being "working towards expected", "expected" or "working at a greater depth" within RE. The learning is built upon each year to ensure continuity and progression.

In our Reception class, pupils' attainment is assessed in relation to the early learning goals. At Key Stage One and Two, assessment of learning in R.E. is contained in two Attainment Targets. These are closely related and not taught in isolation:

AT 1 LEARNING ABOUT RELIGION (Knowledge and Understanding of Religion)

Learning about religion refer to how pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding with reference to: beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life and forms of expression.

AT 2 LEARNING FROM RELIGION (Reflection on Meaning)

Learning from religion refer to how pupils, in the light of their learning about religion, express their responses and insights with regard to questions and issues about: identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth and values and commitments.

These targets are interdependent and their purpose is to aid the process of improving pupils' achievement by enabling class teachers to monitor their progress and attainment. They also enable reports on pupils' progress to be valid and accurate.

Every half term teachers assess each child against their key knowledge building blocks and unit outcomes. These assessment sheets are handed in to the RE co-ordinator every half term.

Pages 75-77 of the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus have been used to form basic "I can" statements for each unit of work. They also give a good indicator of where pupils should be in their learning.

The pupils receive a report annually, which contains information about progress in R.E. as well as a comment on the effort, presentation skills and general progress.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

Half termly plans and assessment sheets are passed to the RE Leader to monitor provision for R.E. across the school.

R.E work is moderated each term by the RE Leader as part of regular monitoring and outcomes/action points discussed with individual staff. Samples of work are handed in annually. Best practise RE work is discussed at staff meetings and a folder of exemplary work kept.

Photographs of displays are taken as a record of work undertaken and children are asked for their opinions on the RE studied in pupil conferencing every year. The RE leader regularly

attends local and national RE courses and training to keep informed about recent RE initiatives and updates. These are fed back to staff at training days and staff meetings.

11. Equal Opportunities

At St Mary's the RE taught builds on and is enriched by the different experiences that our pupils bring in to school. It meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties or who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, EAL children, pupils from all religious communities and pupils from all ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

Differentiation in RE is vitally important. The class teacher ensures that they have differentiated activities to meet the needs of the less able and the more able children within their class. In line with our SEN and Inclusion policy, appropriate provision is provided in RE for children who need additional support. This could be provided in various forms including extra resources, adult support or the use of ICT.

12. Health and Safety

All religious artefacts are handled respectfully and safely. All relevant risk assessments are carried out in line with school policy when handling artefacts and visiting places of worship. All websites are checked before use with the children to ensure they are appropriate. Any visitors to RE lessons are briefed fully by the class teacher prior to their visit so that the learning objectives are clear and fully understood. This ensures against religious indoctrination.

13. Parental involvement

Parents and carers are informed each term of the RE topic being studied by information placed on the school website and through topic leaflets that are sent home.

Although a Church School, we hope all children will participate in RE. We acknowledge that parents and carers do have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and worship. We encourage parents and carers to contact the Head teacher or R.E. Leader if they have any concerns about the policy, provision and practice of R.E. at our school.

Parents and carers have also contributed to the teaching and learning of RE by bringing artefacts and food that are important to their religion and sharing their experiences at religious festivals. This helps to give the teaching of RE real context and deepens the understanding of the pupils.

14. Governor involvement

The SIAMS toolkit is updated every year by the Head teacher, the RE Leader, the RE/SMSC Governor. Parent and carer questionnaires are sent home every two years about RE and Collective Worship at St. Mary's. Children also complete questionnaires to help us evaluate the effectiveness of RE in the school.

The RE governors also visits lessons to inform reports to the governing body.

The role of RE in the school is reviewed by the SMSC Governor in pupil conferencing in the Summer Term. This is then fed back to the Governing body annually.

