



*Matthew 5 verse 16*

*'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'*

**St Mary's CE Primary Academy**

**RE Policy**

**2024-2026**



## Introduction

St Mary's C of E Primary Academy is a Church of England School, with Christian Values at the heart of everything we do. The Christian vision of St. Mary's C of E Primary Academy is the golden thread which drives, guides and inspires our school community.

## Our Vision Statement

Develop the individual light in every child, so they can learn as much as possible and reach their unique potential. We want to ignite curiosity through our curriculum and create a culture of gratitude and good deeds. With hope and humility, we want our child to take on the world and make it a better place.

Our vision is rooted in the scripture in Matthew 5 verse 16,

**'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'**

We know that just one tiny candle can light up the darkest place. At St Mary's we want to let our light shine for all so that they may know the light of Jesus too. Shine in school, in the local community and in the global world!

Our vision strongly shapes our RE curriculum. The RE curriculum supports the development of the individual light in every child, so they can **learn as much as possible** about Christianity and other world religions and world views in the time they have with us. We want to **ignite pupils' curiosity** so that they develop a broad and deep understanding of different faiths and beliefs especially within our rich school context. The RE curriculum supports our pupils to respect, understand and celebrate diversity so that they can appreciate everyone, show **gratitude and good deeds** to all and **take on the world** with understanding, **hope and humility**.

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person. (Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019).

At St Mary's C of E (VC) Primary Academy, pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We teach according to the Leeds Agreed RE syllabus.

RE is an academic subject and seen as a core subject at our school: this means that RE is taught at St Mary's in a way that is rigorous and intellectually stimulating. It requires pupils to think critically about religious beliefs and practices, and to develop their own understanding of the world.

It provides pupils with the opportunity to understand what it means to be a religious believer in the world today: this means that RE helps our children to understand the different ways in which people around the world express their religious beliefs. It also helps them to understand the challenges and opportunities that religious believers face in the modern world.

It also encourages our pupils to encounter the values of the Christian community of our school and understand the values that are important to our community.

As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum and we use Understanding Christianity to give our children a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice. Through the Understanding Christianity resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological

concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious, theological and cultural literacy.

Links with our school vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We 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.

### **Aims and Objectives**

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all pupils:

- 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.
- Curriculum for Religious Education RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- Is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.
- Reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy. Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. (Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE.)
- Enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- Provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.
- Supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.
- Encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs



- Offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- Ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

## Curriculum Balance and Time

Reflecting the school's trust deed or academy 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 RE curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, explicitly meeting 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 key stages 1-4.

## Time Allocation

It is recommended that RE is taught for a minimum of 36 hours per year at Key Stage One (50 mins per week), and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two (1 hr per week). (This reflects 5%, see above.) At St Mary's, EYFS follow the Key Stage One guidance for their time allocation of RE – this is a blended approach of direct teaching and learning within the provision areas.

## Curriculum

A long term plan has been developed meeting the requirements of the Diocesan Syllabus. Teachers are supported in implementing this effectively through the progression map which sets out the key knowledge expected that pupils will know and understand in each year group. These build cumulatively so that pupils build on prior knowledge. Studies of the Christian faith are based on additional documentation from Understanding Christianity and NATRE. These plans map out in more detail the sequences of learning. Other world religions and world views are revisited so that pupils can deepen their understanding throughout their time at St Mary's. MTP's are developed by teachers for each RE unit of work. These map out in detail the knowledge and key vocabulary that will be learnt.

## Teaching and Learning

We recognise the importance of teaching RE in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and world views. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- reading and critically analysing texts
- interpreting information from different sources
- researching information for themselves
- listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils
- engaging in pair and group work
- exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- experiencing visits and visitors
- taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. Questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

### **Cross-Curricular Links**

Cross curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning. Religious education supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship.

### **Visits, Visitors and Experiences.**

We are able to visit places of worship in the immediate vicinity of the school / our local area / our region, where faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in the teaching of RE. We aim to use this valuable resource for all classes. We also encourage our staff, pupils and parents to share their diverse beliefs within RE lessons.

### **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
- produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date
- ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage
- monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work
- monitor the standards, quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress
- ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE
- monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff
- liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school
- support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions
- seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members
- 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

### **Matching Work to Pupils' Needs**

Our whole school policy regarding pupils with special needs and adaptation applies to RE. Teachers will ensure that all pupils can access an ambitious and appropriate RE curriculum.



## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in Religious Education will:

- be directly related to the expectations of the Diocesan RE syllabus
- will include formative assessment such as retrieval practice at the beginning of lessons to secure and deepen learning
- will include teachers effectively checking in lessons for understanding
- pre and post assessments aligned to the essential knowledge pupils are expected to learn. Post assessment information is noted simply in terms of pupils who may not have secured the intended learning and those who have achieved a greater depth of understanding. This is noted on MTP's and these are reviewed by the RE Leader
- pupil voice and work scrutiny is also a way in which teachers and the RE leader will review the progress pupils are making in RE
- include effective feedback to pupils following the school's marking policy
- enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development
- enable effective reporting to parents

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

We intend that this policy should operate for the next two years, and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that our RE policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to share a copy of the planning for RE with the subject leader each ½ term. The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice.

## **Self-Evaluation**

The subject leader for RE, SLT and governors will assess and review the subject's strengths and areas for development taking into account the outcomes of regular monitoring.

## **Staff Training and CPD**

All staff have access to RE CPD in line with the subject leader's identified areas for development. This is either 'in house' or through diocesan support. The RE subject leader also attends local network meetings and has access to diocesan support.

## **Resources**

We have a wide range of resources to support our RE teaching, that we continue to develop. Religious education 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 SACRE / NATRE and the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff.

## **Legal Requirements**

Religious Education will be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over). (DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28.)



## Parental Right of Withdrawal

Parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 18 or over) have the right to request that a pupil be withdrawn from all or part of the RE provided. There is no requirement to provide reasons for the request but we will encourage the opportunity to discuss the RE curriculum and arrangements for the withdrawal with parents. We will review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents. Parents will need to request this with the Head teacher and/or RE leader so that arrangements can be made.

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

This policy has taken into account the latest Statement for Entitlement guidance (2019) and the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule.

**Review date:** Autumn term 2026