



Aspiring, nurturing, flourishing;
together shining a light

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16

Friendship

Compassion

Trust

Forgiveness

Courage

Perseverance

Religious Education Policy

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Religious Education and the School Vision

At St Mary's Rickmansworth CofE Primary School, our vision is "Aspiring, Nurturing, Flourishing; Together Shining a Light." Rooted in the teachings of Jesus and inspired by Matthew 5:13–16, we believe that every child is uniquely created and valued by God, with gifts, talents and a purpose to discover. Through our vision, we seek to nurture the whole child—academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually and morally—so that all members of our community can flourish and shine their light in the world.

At St Mary's we love shining a light on faith and belief. RE has a place like no other subject in our curriculum in that it gives time to explore 3 key areas of life: What does it mean to have faith or beliefs? What impact do faith and beliefs have on a person's life? What difference, impact and effect might this have on my own life? Our RE curriculum is designed to help each child flourish in understanding the world in which they live and most importantly, who they are within it. 'Religious literacy' is our aim.

RE Policy Statement

Religious education is unique in the curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that: 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

Aims

The broad aims of religious education are set out within the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2019). The primary purpose of religious education is to promote religious literacy. By this we mean that pupils are able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.

The aims of RE are to enable 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 studied;
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human experience and existence;

- 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; and
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

In achieving these aims, religious education contributes in a significant way to the flourishing of all children, allowing them to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

Curriculum

Religious education is an academic subject, delivered in an academic, objective and pluralistic manner.

The curriculum for religious education is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences.

Theology: This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

Philosophy: This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

Human/Social Sciences: This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

A sequential curriculum map has been designed in order to allow pupils to become religiously literate through developing, year on year, their knowledge and skills. The three disciplines detailed above provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

- At Key Stage One, pupils study primarily Christianity and Judaism, along with one unit on Islam.
- At Key Stage Two pupils study units on Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, with one unit on Humanism.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2019), two thirds of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly teaching of religious education, with additional visitors, trips and time given in the curriculum for philosophical reflection.

Our curriculum follows 2 outstanding resources: 'Understanding Christianity' for our units on Christianity, and 'The Emmanuel Project' for all other faiths and world views. Both resources follow a similar format, exploring a key concept through 3 strands:

Teaching RE

Each Year group explores 6 units per academic year. All units are built around an enquiry question and explored through our learning journeys. Each learning journey provides key vocabulary and an aspirational figure or concept (on which we 'shine a light'). RE is taught through a range of activities and includes visitors and visits to places of worship, as we believe that this helps us to make sense of other's beliefs and world views.

Within the taught units of Christianity, key concepts at the heart of the Christian faith (God, Incarnation, Salvation, Gospel, Creation) are revisited within different key stages. Within the taught units of other world faiths, each one of the 3 main faiths is explored, and revisited within 2 different year groups. We have specifically chosen this structure to nurture and deepen pupil's understanding of faith and beliefs, and allow time to make links with the core concepts of each belief system.

Religious education uses an enquiry-based approach to learning.

Strand 1: Making Sense (theology) – Children will find out what people believe through key concepts, exploring a text or narrative within that faith as well as significant figures

Strand 2: Understanding the Impact (sociology) – Pupils will explore individual and community practices within contemporary examples

Strand 3: Making connections (philosophy) – Pupils will evaluate, reflect and consider others' beliefs alongside their own thoughts, views and values

A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure learning is challenging and relevant including the use of art, music, thinking skills, artefacts and stories.

Assessment

The impact of our RE curriculum is seen in the understanding, articulation and respect our pupils show as they journey through the school. Pupil curiosity, empathy and consideration has been shaped and nurtured as they progress from one year to the next, fuelled by knowledge, experience, times of discussion and debate, and purposeful times for reflection.

We use formative assessment during lessons which include quizzing. Summative assessment at the end of each unit, is used to reflect on key steps within the concept explored. Teacher observations and pupil voice are incorporated to create a more valuable and engaging learning experience where pupils leave as religiously literate, reflective pupils.

Progress is tracked through self and adult evaluation as well as recorded on Insight Tracking.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The co-ordinator will monitor provision and standards within the school through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff.

The co-ordinator is responsible for contributing to the school's self-evaluation process. In addition, the governing body monitors the role of religious education within the school and its contribution to the Christian vision of the school.

Responsibilities for RE within each school

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the local governing body and headteacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the aims of the RE curriculum;
- the subject is well-led and effectively managed;
- standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD;
- clear information is provided on the school website about the RE curriculum;
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress;

The Right of Withdrawal From RE

Our school is an inclusive community but recognises that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, 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.

Managing the right of withdrawal

- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given;
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where religious education is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated;
- If pupils are withdrawn from religious education, the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on the premises;

Role of the RE Leader

- To ensure that the RE policy is implemented and to keep up to date with reviews;
- To have oversight of the RE curriculum and keep up to date with local and national changes;
- To monitor, review and update resources;
- To monitor pupil progress and achievement;
- To maintain and build priorities set by the school;
- To develop links with the Church and Diocese;
- To coach, mentor and support teachers in developing their strengths in teaching RE, including planning, arranging and delivering CPD as appropriate; and
- To liaise with parents to ensure all children receive their entitlement.

Entitlement and Inclusion - EAL, SEN, More Able

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced RE curriculum. Through Quality First Teaching, teachers use a range of adaptive strategies, including our *5-a-Day* approach and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP), to ensure all pupils can access learning and make progress.

Pupils with SEND and EAL are supported through appropriate adaptations, vocabulary development and carefully planned scaffolds. More able pupils are challenged through deeper questioning, enquiry and opportunities to explore and justify their thinking. High expectations ensure that all pupils are supported and challenged to flourish.

The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Examining and exploring religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in religious education, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Religious education plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

Religious education makes an important contribution promoting community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective religious education will promote community cohesion at each of these four levels.

The school community

Religious education provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located

Religious education provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community

A major focus of religious education is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community

Religious education involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

Religious education subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and

beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation and impact of the policy will be evaluated through the school's self-evaluation processes. The policy will be reviewed every two years.