

St Mary's Bryanston Square CE Primary School



Religious Education Policy
December 2016 (updated September 2017)

Excellence with compassion
“Love your neighbour as yourself” Mark 12.31

Our Vision

To provide an excellent learning environment, which promotes achievement in every area, and nurtures the social, emotional and spiritual well-being of the whole school community.

1. THE AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT ST MARY'S SCHOOL (Why do we do it?)

Through the teaching of Religious Education, we seek to address children's understanding of themselves and of others, to prepare them for life in an ever-changing world. It is distinct from, but enhanced by, the school's programme for Collective Worship.

Our core aims are:

- A. **to nurture pupils' spiritual development** so that children:
- develop a secure sense of identity and belonging
 - engage with questions of meaning and purpose in life
 - explore the feelings, behaviour, life choices and difficulties they encounter
 - gain a deep understanding of God and role faith plays in life
 - have opportunities for awe, wonder and mystery
- B. **to develop pupils' religious literacy** so that children:
- are prepared for life as citizens in a multi-faith society
 - understand what the core teachings and practices of Christianity and other principal religions/world views represented in Great Britain are, and what they are not
 - can interact respectfully with people of all faiths or world views, whilst retaining an understanding of the distinctive nature of their own and others' beliefs
 - can explore issues within and between faiths to help them understand different religions, beliefs, values and traditions
 - understand how people's religious or non-religious beliefs impact on individuals, societies, communities and cultures
- C. **to secure a deep theological understanding of the Christian faith** of the school as understood by St Mary's Bryanston Square Church, and the practices of the Church of England, so that children:
- know what Christians believe about God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the difference He makes to the lives of believers
 - have a good knowledge of the Bible and can make links between Biblical texts and behaviour
 - know that there are special times in the Church's year, and particular practices which help Christians worship and live out their faith
 - understand their intrinsic value as made in the image of God, and the value of others who they should 'love as themselves'
- D. **to make learning from and about religions enjoyable and interesting**, so that children:
- form positive attitudes about the practice of faith
 - see reflection and thinking deeply about themselves and their lives as a meaningful activity, which supports their mental health and emotional well-being
 - love learning, and develop the curiosity to keep learning beyond St Mary's school

Christian Values in Religious Education

Our 6 core Christian Values have been agreed through discussion with the whole school community, and are designed to include the whole school community, whilst also remaining distinctively Christian. This is shown in the way they are underpinned by Biblical texts, which are reinforced through Worship, displays and celebrations of children's behaviour. It is expected that teachers will make reference to these when teaching Religious Education as appropriate. We study each value *in depth* half-terminally through Collective Worship.

- **Curiosity** - 'Let the wise listen and add to their learning.' Proverbs 1:5
- **Love** - 'Now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.' 1 Corinthians 13:13
- **Respect** - "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." Luke 6:31
- **Forgiveness** - "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Matthew 6:4
- **Honesty** - 'Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.' Philippians 4:8
- **Feeling Safe** - 'They will live safety, and no one will make them afraid.' Ezekiel 34:28

2. PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT (What do we do?)

Early Years

The teaching of Religious Education in the EYFS centres mainly around the children themselves: who they are, who is special to them and the families and communities they belong to. They learn about different religious festivals, a range of Biblical and other religious stories, and begin to learn who Jesus is.

Delivery of RE is usually through either circle times or through play activities throughout the day, both planned and child-initiated.

Both F1 and F2 now use the new LDBS scheme of work, which enables children to explore RE concepts through play and storytelling.

Key Stage 1

RE in Key Stage 1 is taught weekly by class teachers, according to the school scheme of work. RE is taught for at least 1 hour a week (ie 5% of curriculum time), and is discrete from Collective Worship. There may also be opportunities for cross-curricular learning across the curriculum. This should be in addition to the weekly RE lesson.

Children share their experiences of faith and belonging, learn about the place of prayer in religion, understand the role of the Church and learn the significance of major religious festivals. Two thirds of RE teaching in KS1 is Christian. Islam, Judaism and Hinduism are also studied. There is a balance between learning about religions, and also learning from religions, with an emphasis on children learning how to think for themselves based on what they have understood about faith.

We use a combination of the new LDBS scheme of work and Understanding Christianity (see Curriculum Map 2017-18).

Key Stage 2

RE in Key Stage 2 is taught weekly by class teachers, or school support teachers, according to the school scheme of work. RE is taught for at least 1 hour 20 minutes a week (ie 5% of curriculum time), and is discrete from Collective Worship.

Children learn more about Jesus as the central figure of Christianity and about other key religious leaders, about the role of Sacred Texts within religions, about the history and significance of the Church and other places of worship, and about sacraments and rites of passage. Christianity forms thirds of what is studied, both in discrete Christian units and through thematic units such as 'The Journey of Life and Death'. Due to the religious make-up of our school, the children are taught for a whole term (2 half terms) on Islam, and study Judaism at both lower and upper KS2. There is a balance between learning about religions, and also learning from religions, with an emphasis on children learning how to think for themselves based on what they have understood about faith and understanding the similarities and differences between religions to encourage our school values of love, honesty and respect.

We use a combination of the new LDBS scheme of work and Understanding Christianity (see Curriculum Map 2017-18).

Assessment

In the Nursery and Reception classes (F1 and F2) the Early Years Profile is used as a means of recording significant achievement in relation to the EYFS Curriculum. Assessment is through the areas of UTW and PSED in the EYFS profile. F2 (Reception) are also starting to record assessments through the school's RE assessment system.

From Year 1 to Year 6, teacher assessment, based on the national 'I Can' statements (which incorporate both learning about and learning from RE), is recorded on the school's RE assessment grids. These should be updated three times a year (termly) and can be found on the network in 'Assessment and Test data/ 2015 Life After Levels/ RE'. Teachers should use these grids to conduct a gap analysis to see which areas the children are weaker in, so that they can plan accordingly. It is important to note that RE is unlike any other subject; *what* we are assessing is not just content, knowledge or skills, but the children's ability to apply what they have learnt to their own lives and their on-going spiritual development. Assessment systems are a tool to underpin this, but examples of children's work, displays and conversations with pupils are just as valid. Teachers are encouraged to use post-it notes to capture pupils' responses to RE, as these are often 'in the moment' and not at convenient assessment times!

Progress is tracked through the school by SLT using both pupil data, and the qualitative evidence from books and reflections, to ensure that standards are high. Pupils' learning in RE is reported at the end of the year in the annual report to parents.

Teachers will employ Assessment for Learning techniques throughout their teaching of RE to enable the children to make *at least* good progress.

3. MONITORING THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (How do we know?)

RE is monitored as part of the school's yearly monitoring cycle to ensure high quality teaching and learning. Where possible, staff are involved in this process so it is developmental, not critical. Eg Work scrutiny in INSET meetings, for staff to learn from each other's practice.

Scheduled monitoring is as follows:

- **Medium term (half-termly) planning is monitored by:** SLT
- **Weekly planning is monitored by:** RE Subject Leader and SLT as part of SLT monitoring schedule
- **Children's books are monitored:** termly by the RE Subject Leader + additional checks by SLT according to monitoring schedule
- **Quality of teaching is monitored by Learning Walks and Lesson observations by:** SLT/ RE Subject Leader / RE Governor/ LDBS

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES/ WITHDRAWAL

- Teachers should be aware of the different religious and faith groups represented in their class. This is a key strength of our school and can be an invaluable resource for teaching. In all discussions about faith and religion we always speak respectfully, whilst recognising that there are differences in what different children (and staff) believe.
- This is a subject to which children can respond with knowledge and interest, even when they have newly arrived in the country with little or no English. Visual and hands-on activities as well as art, music and drama can be very helpful to support EAL children with their spiritual development and understanding of faith. Therefore creativity is central to much of the work done in this subject.
- Religious Education is a subject which is especially important for children with Special Educational Needs, as it directly addresses issues such as equal opportunities and self esteem, and invites personal responses. In this subject, success should be genuinely independent from attainment in formal curriculum skills.

As a Church of England School, we see Religious Education as a crucial element of promoting the community cohesion we value so highly, and it is our aim that all the children in our care will participate in the RE lessons we provide. However, we do appreciate that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education, including trips, and we respect that right. We would always ask parents with a concern in this area to discuss the matter with the Headteacher.

Reviewed and amended December 2016

Approved by GB in March 2016

Reviewed September 2017 to reflect change in Curriculum Resources

To be reviewed September 2019

RE Subject Leader: Emily Norman

Responsible Governor: Revd Ben Jones

Responsible Committee: Achievement, Community and Values