



## Policy for Religious Education

November 2024

*Approved by Full Governing Body November 2024*

*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 Newdigate and St Michael's, 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. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the use of an enquiry skills-based approach we engage with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Using the Guildford Diocese Agreed Syllabus we learn about other religions and world views, fostering respect for them. Links with our Christian values and 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.

*The Surrey Agreed Syllabus 2023:*

*Religious Education contributes dynamically to pupils' and students' education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs (religious and non-religious), issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and from worldviews, including Christianity and other principal religions and beliefs (including non-religious perspectives such as Humanism) in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.*

*Pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully. Teaching therefore should equip them with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews, beliefs, concepts and practices, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities (personal knowledge). Religious Education should also develop in pupils and students an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diversity of beliefs. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences, whilst respecting the right of others to differ. Religious Education supports pupils and students in developing their sense of identity and belonging and enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse world.*

### **Our School Vision**

***'In Special Place to Learn and Grow'*** is our overarching school vision.

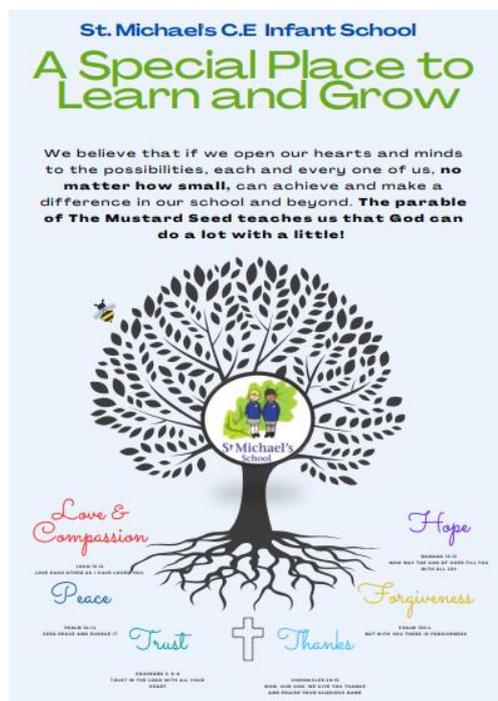
*We believe that if we open our hearts and minds to the possibilities each and every one of us, no matter how small, can make a difference in our school and beyond. The parable of The Mustard Seed teaches us that God can do a lot with a little!*

Our 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.

At Newdigate and St Michael's we aim to provide a happy community where all work together and all are loved, valued and respected as unique individuals.

Our community provides a nurturing environment where very young children can flourish and grow, building strong foundations for their next steps and future life. We have **6 core Christian values** (Love, Peace, Trust, Thankfulness, Forgiveness and Hope) that are depicted in the roots of our values tree.

Our Christian ethos provides the framework for education, including religious education, in our school and underpins our whole curriculum.



### Our School Values:

					
<b><u>John 15:12</u></b>	<b><u>Psalm 34:14</u></b>	<b><u>Proverbs 3: 5-6</u></b>	<b><u>Chronicles 29:13</u></b>	<b><u>Psalm 130:4</u></b>	<b><u>Romans 15:13</u></b>
<b>Love each other as I have loved you.</b>	<b>Seek peace and pursue it</b>	Trust in the Lord with all your heart	Now, our God, we give you thanks and praise your glorious name	<b>But with you there is forgiveness</b>	<b>Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy</b>
<b>We show love and compassion for each other.</b>	<b>We will make a peaceful school and world.</b>	We put our trust in each other.	We are thankful for what we have and will look after our world.	<b>We always try to forgive each other.</b>	<b>We are hopeful for ourselves and others.</b>

At the heart of all we do, it is our aspiration that our children will live out these values both now, in school and at home, and later as they journey on in life. Our school values are underpinned by the British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect and Tolerance of Those with Different Faiths and Beliefs.

Alongside our School Values we have our **Bee Rules** which help to guide our daily choices



### National Curriculum Requirements for Key Stage 1

In line with legal requirements for Voluntary Aided Church of England Schools we ensure that we provide RE in accordance with the teachings of the Anglican Church. We follow the Guildford Diocesan Guidelines for RE.

#### Curriculum balance and time

Reflecting the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2019, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that Christianity is the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. A minimum 5% of weekly curriculum time, but ideally more, meeting explicitly RE objectives, is committed to the delivery of RE.

Note: Collective Worship is not part of the "taught day" and so is not included in the calculation of R.E. teaching time.

#### Aims and Objectives

It is both a privilege and of huge importance to consider and explore the more profound questions of life and faith with our children. Children come to school with a natural curiosity about their world and existence. RE learning gives children an opportunity to ask questions and to formulate their own thinking; to develop spiritually, building respect, tolerance and understanding of others. It will help to nurture a knowledge and understanding of God and to understand Christian faith as well as the thoughts and practices of other religions.

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**

Religious Education is taught according to the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023-2028. RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for the leadership team, 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 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

### **Delivery**

Children will participate in a wide range of activities and experiences. They will be given opportunities to develop spiritually and learn through:

- First-hand experience - the use of visitors, visits to places of worship, artefacts and festivals
- Expression – using imaginative play, drama, hot seating, creative art and design, dance, literacy
- Investigation and interpretation- of stories, religious texts (including the Bible), beliefs, practices and religious ways of life
- Reflection - consideration of their own and others feelings, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and spirituality

- Making links (synthesising) – making connections between learning and life
- Enquiry based learning - investigation, interpretation and understanding;
- Evaluation – critically engaging with what they have been learning, responding to the thoughts and opinions of other children, answering the key enquiry questions.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Our RE curriculum is designed to ensure a balance of theology, sociology and philosophy. We have identified these as three Golden Threads:

- ‘God’: relating to theological approaches;
- ‘Identity’: relating to more philosophical approaches;
- ‘Community’: relating to sociological approaches.



These ‘Golden Threads’ are threaded throughout the units of work as part of the syllabus progression model in the way that they develop children’s knowledge, understanding and skills in age-appropriate ways.

Pupils’ own perspectives form a part of their learning within the syllabus as part of the development of their personal knowledge. Using pupils’ starting points is one of the ways in which the syllabus strives to be inclusive of the wide spectrum of religious and non-religious beliefs that are a part of our community.

### **Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through:**

- Posing and discussing ‘big’ and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- 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 to places of worship, and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- Taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Our History work, ‘Stand Up, Stand Out’ also helps to reinforce this. 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. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children’s own lives. 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.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The RE curriculum for the EYFS always starts from where the children are, often taking a child’s-eye view and drawing upon their personal experiences. The curriculum allows children to explore the world around them from this starting point. We have weekly RE lessons. See Long Term Plan

### **Key Stage 1**

Our R.E. unit planning is guided by Guildford Diocesan Guidelines for Religious Education, which ensure a balanced and comprehensive R.E. curriculum (see the R.E. Learning overview Long Term Plan).

Long term planning for RE is undertaken in the context of the school's overall curriculum plan which reflects the needs of all the children. The staff agree the order of when the units are delivered.

Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the worldviews, beliefs and 'lived experience' of some Christian, Jewish and Muslim people, and some non-religious people.

Pupils become more aware of other peoples' worldviews and are encouraged to develop important subject-specific and cross-curricular skills.

Some R.E. learning is **additionally** taught as part of our Time to Pause sessions; outdoor learning; and in our Geography topic, 'Around the World' which includes looking at how Christmas is celebrated in different countries.

### Pause Days/Time to Pause

One Christian 'Pause Day' and one Pause Day for another faith is held every year. On these special days, we 'pause' the ordinary timetable and spend the day focusing in creative and reflective ways. The children are sometimes in their tri-angles (mixed-age groups) and spend one session in each classroom over the course of the day, learning about different aspects. The teaching and activities are carefully planned to be accessible to all ages and abilities and might include collaborative artwork, cooking, music, dance, drama and writing. Stories and objects are used to bring the learning to life and create an environment with opportunities to reflect, interpret, synthesise and empathise, which encourages spiritual development and deep thinking.

Time to Pause sessions are also planned to enable 'spaced learning', for celebrations/festivals from different faiths.

See Long Term Planning for Pause Days and Time to Pause sessions.

### Progression

Progression is ensured by using the Unit Planning information and the Sticky Knowledge PowerPoints designed for each year group.

### Differentiation to encompass the full range of abilities

A range of methods are used - this could be targeted by outcome, differentiation through setting different tasks, questioning, adult support, or the use of different resources. The needs of all vulnerable children including those of the SEN register will be accounted for.

### Assessment Recording and Reporting

There are both formative and summative assessments made by the teachers for all children.

In the **EYFS** the children's progress is assessed and monitored at the end of 3 of the R.E. units\*; additionally, it is monitored throughout the year in the EYFS areas of, primarily 'People, Cultures and Communities', but also 'Building Relationships'. Class books are created to show the journey and discussions through the topic. At the end of the academic year the children are assessed in all areas of the EYFS against the criteria of 'Emerging', and 'Expected'.

### **Assessment in Religious Education will:**

- Be directly related to the expectations of the Surrey Agreed Syllabus

- Recognise the importance of Religious Education in a Church school, while also recognising that the taught time is considerably less than that of English and maths.
- Seek to identify pupils' development of factual knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Inform next steps in teaching and learning both for individual pupils and class groups.
- Inform whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.
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### **Monitoring**

Christine Smyth is our RE Governor, and along with our joint Chair of Governors, Alok and Pat Hand, they are responsible for monitoring RE.

The Religious Education subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's learning and the quality of teaching in religious education.

### **Role of the RE subject leader**

The subject leader, Gayle Priestley will:

- support colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education.
- be informed about any current developments in the subject, locally and nationally.
- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school - Intent, Implementation and Impact (RE Deep Dive).
- attend termly RE network meetings at Guildford Diocese.
- Be responsible for drawing up the elements of the policy and guidelines.
- 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 the 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 year group.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards. This will include book looks, lesson observations and data analysis. When observing teaching, the RE leader will use our RE Teaching Charter
- 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.
- 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.

## **Resources**

Religious education is funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resources are available for both staff and pupils on all major religions.

Resources are respected and handled correctly. They are kept in the staffroom in labelled boxes with appropriate artefacts and books.

## **Equal Opportunities**

This relates to the Equal Opportunities and Inclusion Policies. All pupil groups will be provided for according to their identified needs. We ensure equal access to the RE curriculum for all regardless of ability, gender, race or disability.

## **Health and Safety Issues**

Equipment should be stored and handled correctly and with respect.

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy and risk assessments in these circumstances.

## **Parental right of withdrawal from RE**

Parents have the right to request that their child does not take part in RE lessons. Parents will be encouraged to discuss this request with the Headteacher to see if their child could join in with some parts of the syllabus. If parents request the withdrawal of their children from RE lessons, children will be provided with alternative work to do while their peers are studying RE. Teachers also have a right to request that they do not teach RE to their classes.

## **Legal Requirements**

Religious Education must 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)

The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child from all, or part of Religious Education, and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the head teacher before making this decision.

Where pupils are withdrawn from all or parts of the RE curriculum, they will engage in a personal project linked to the wider curriculum.