



## Religious Education Policy

### School Vision Statement

*'Aspirational opportunities for all through the breath of God.'*

*St George's leads the community by following the teachings of Christ through holistically ensuring excellence for all. Through our happy, secure and stimulating environment all members of the school community grow in self-esteem and potential. Their spiritual, academic and social needs are celebrated as part of daily life.*

The bible story of the Feeding of the 5000 encapsulates our school values of LOVE, TRUST, CARE, SHARE and RESPECT – Matthew 14 verses 16-20

## **Policy Statement for Religious Education**

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)*

## **Introduction**

At St George's C of E Primary School, pupils and their families can expect a high quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is challenging, 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 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 literacy. Using the Kent 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. 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**

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, religious education in this school aims:

To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.

To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.

To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St. George's Church of England Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable pupils to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world religions in line with the Kent agreed syllabus. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the pupils learn from religions as well as about religions.

## **Objectives**

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, the following objectives are age appropriate at the end of our pupils' education in school. The expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and, as a minimum, pupils are able to:

Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.

Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.

Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.

Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

## **Teaching and Learning**

RE has a high profile within our school curriculum and is comparable with other core curriculum areas. Quality teaching in RE helps generate respect for different views and interpretations where real dialogue takes place. Learners develop and use a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion and world views as lived by believers. Key cross-curricular skills such as reading, writing, observation, and discussion are practised. Rigorous assessment based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts shows that attainment is high and progress significant in developing an understanding of Christianity and a range of other world religions and on other world views as appropriate.

RE offers a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences, understanding that pupils learn best in different ways. Pupils will experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry based style of learning by:

- Listening to the teacher and each other.
- Asking and discussing ‘big’ questions
- Reading of texts.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Discussion with the teacher and other pupils.
- Paired and group work.
- Using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Visits and visitors.
- Artwork.
- Outdoor learning.
- Time for reflection.

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious

traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals.

### **Differentiation and Special Educational Needs**

Policy and practice in religious education reflects whole school policy and encompasses the full range and ability of all pupils. All pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs. A range of teaching and learning strategies to achieve differentiated learning are used including task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping. There is particular concern to ensure that all tasks are challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils whilst extending the most able. We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

### **Breadth and balance**

Although work on Christianity will predominate, there will be in-depth work on the major world religions and on other world views as appropriate. Teaching will seek to bring about a deeper knowledge and understanding of

religious traditions but also to develop a range of skills such as the ability to empathise and evaluate attitudes, and develop respect for diversity.

### **Time Allocation**

The Kent Agreed Syllabus requires a minimum of 5% curriculum time for RE (REact Syllabus p7), which amounts to one hour a week at Key Stage One and 1.25 hours at Key Stage Two. (This is in addition to time for Worship). As a Church school, where RE is treated as a core subject, we make sure that this is fulfilled.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Religious education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. It seeks 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 will be treated with sensitivity and respect.

### **Relevance**

Teachers will establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching will enable 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. This will be done through engaging pupils in an enquiry based style of learning and by posing challenging questions to and by pupils.

### **Cross-curricular links**

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, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship.

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in doing so; they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

## **Health and Safety**

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 and educational visits policy in these circumstances.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in religious education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as Understanding Christianity.
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Kent Agreed Syllabus.
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Include pupil self-assessment.
- 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.

## **Feedback**

All pieces of R.E work must follow the school's feedback policy and should reflect the English skills appropriate for their year groups. Feedback is specific to the religion being studied and gives pupils opportunities to reflect on their previous learning. Teachers respond to pupils' work through key questions and next steps which children are expected to respond to. Key spellings must also be identified for pupils to correct. Early Years and Year 1 teachers will record pupil learning in big books.

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

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education. (Statement of Entitlement February 2019 The Church of England Education Office)  
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/RE%20Statement%20of%20Entitlement%20for%20Church%20Schools.pdf>
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Ensure all teachers are aware of 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.
- Support colleagues and help develop their subject expertise.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy, schemes of work, the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of RE, pupils' progress and standards.
- Liaise periodically with the HT and Governors.
- Seek opportunities for professional development for themselves and other staff.
- Order resources.
- Monitor assessments.
- Observe the teaching of RE in school, providing support and guidance for teachers.
- Ensure there is a school protocol that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.



## **Resources**

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep resources for Religious Education in the central resources room where there is a separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion.

Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased or renewed as needed, this may include books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts and food items. 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. The Abbey is used throughout the year to support pupil learning.

## **Legal Requirements**

From the time of the 1944 Education Act, parents have had the right to withdraw their children from religious education. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child 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. Anyone wishing to withdraw their child must discuss this with the head teacher and chair of governors before making this decision, and ensure that their decision is communicated in writing to the school governors.