



Together we love to learn  
and learn to love

## **St Mary's C.E. Infant School**

# **Religious Education (RE) Policy**

St Mary's CE Infant school is committed to inspiring every individual. We embed the Christian value of love across school life because we believe that a person who feels loved, secure and happy can flourish. We encourage everyone to achieve their potential, develop their talents, celebrate their uniqueness, and rejoice in their relationships with others.

*"Do everything in love"*

1 Corinthians 16:14

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# Religious Education (RE) Policy

## Introduction

In St Mary's CE Infant School, RE plays an important role in supporting the Christian vision of the school. RE reflects our value of 'Love' and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and none. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

## The Legal Position

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents (see paragraph below). As a voluntary controlled school, RE is therefore taught in accordance with the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Oxford-Agreed-RE-Syllabus-2015-2020.pdf> while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate the way that RE contributes to the Christian character of the school and the teaching of RE will reflect this requirement.

## Purpose and Aims of RE

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious world-views that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and none. This is religious literacy.

Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion which has most shaped British culture and heritage;
- To enable pupils to know about and understand other world religions and world views and their impact on society, culture and the wider world;
- To enable pupils to consider and express their own ideas and insights;
- To contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and their own spiritual and philosophical convictions;
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose, while exploring and learning how to express their own beliefs, identity and sense of belonging;
- To develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions.

## Curriculum and Time Allocation

The RE curriculum at St. Mary's CE Infant School, follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Christianity is taught in every year group, with key concepts revisited on a spiral curriculum. Approximately 2/3rds of the time is devoted to Christianity. Other religions are covered according to the syllabus; e.g. Judaism in KS1.

The total time for RE is between 7% and 10%, and it is taught in dedicated lessons and cross-curricular settings as appropriate. The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship. In KS1 this will amount to approximately 36 hours per year.

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Themes studied at Key Stage 1 include:

- What do people believe about God, humanity and the natural world?
- What makes some stories special in religion?
- How and why are celebrations important in religion?
- How and why do symbols express religious meaning?
- What makes some teachers and leaders special for religious people?
- What do we get out of belonging to different groups and how do we show that we belong?
- What makes me special?

## Teaching and Learning

An enquiry-based approach to learning is used in RE at St Mary's. Each unit begins with a 'Big Question' which the children can instantly engage with, regardless of their own beliefs and worldviews. Throughout the course of the unit, an enquiry takes place as a class to explore the 'Big Question', in which the children are co-travellers on the journey rather than followers. Each RE lesson will provide an opportunity to explore, build knowledge or understanding, and reflect on the subject of the enquiry. By the end of the unit, each child reflects on what they have learned throughout the enquiry to reach their own conclusion based on evidence.

Throughout the unit or enquiry, children will have the opportunity to explore the 'Big Question' using four main elements:

### **1. Stories**

This includes stories both from a range of religious texts and from 'life stories', including those of people of faith from the past, the present and in our community. Exploration of these accounts and stories will enable children to gain understanding of how identity and actions have been shaped by them. Children go on to interpret what they have heard for themselves, analysing how they may be interpreted differently by different people or groups. Ultimately, they will have the opportunity to evaluate and reflect on how what they have explored contributes to their own understanding and beliefs.

### **2. Questioning**

Through asking questions, the children can develop a better understanding of both themselves and others. Questioning may take on the form of interviewing, writing letters or emails, or constructing questionnaires. By asking questions of believers, children are encouraged to empathise, understand the worldviews and beliefs of others, develop accurate representation of religions and make comparisons between religions. Children will have the opportunity to evaluate and reflect on what they have learned through questioning and to consider how this contributes to their own understanding, beliefs and their enquiry.

### **3. Experiences**

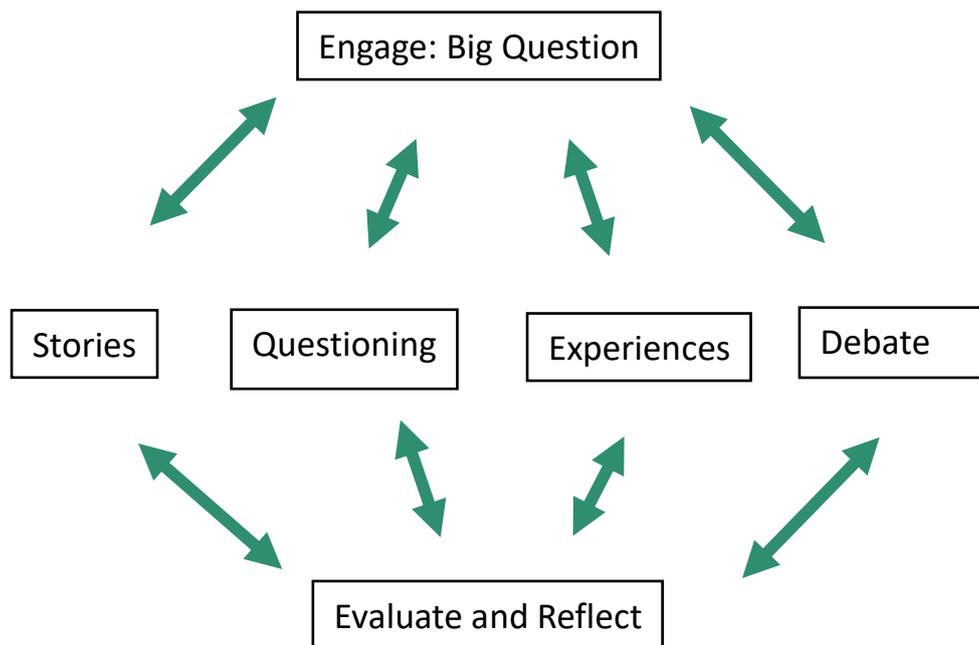
Where appropriate, children are given the opportunity to take part in religious practices and experiences in order to gain understanding of the feelings and emotions of participants. This encourages empathy and deeper understanding of others by experiencing an insider's perspective. As before, children will have the opportunity to reflect and evaluate on how the experience contributes to their own understanding or beliefs and on their enquiry.

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Where possible we want our children to have opportunities to encounter people of other faiths and world views. Children will also be encouraged to share their experiences, knowledge and traditions, whatever their faith background or world view.

#### 4. Debate

By giving children the opportunity to debate in a safe and structured environment, they are encouraged to further explore their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. Children will learn to give evidence and reasons for their opinions and beliefs, as well as critically evaluating and responding to those of others in a respectful manner. A debate will often take place at the end of a unit and enquiry but will also likely have a place at other times during the enquiry.



This approach has been based on and adapted from *The RE-Searchers: A New Approach to Religious Education in Primary Schools* (2015) Freathy, G. et al.

### Progress and Assessment

Assessment procedures will follow those of the Agreed Syllabus and be in accordance with other assessment and feedback procedures in the school. Pupils will engage in a variety of activities which will also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt. Records kept will include information about pupils' experiences and judgements about their attainment and progress, as well as being used to inform planning.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE leader will monitor teaching and learning in RE in accordance with school policy. The RE leader will observe teaching, conduct book and planning reviews and pupil interviews when appropriate to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors will ensure that adequate monitoring takes place and that the impact of such activity is assessed.

## Resources

The RE subject leader will ensure that RE resources are kept up-to-date and that staff are informed when new resources are purchased or made available electronically. Resources will include source materials (e.g. Bibles, visitors, artefacts) where appropriate and be treated with respect by all staff.

## The Right of Withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school. Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to this effect and provide suitable activities for their children. The school will keep pupils safe but will not provide any work or reading material for pupils who have been withdrawn.

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