

**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart.
Colossians 2:23**



RE Policy

Reviewed: January 2018
To be reviewed: January 2019

At St Mark's C of E Primary School we will:

- Welcome everyone
- Build Christian values and worship into our teaching
- Establish strong links between home, school and community
- Endeavour to reach our full potential and celebrate our achievements
- Care for, encourage and respect each other
- Support each other to stay safe, healthy and make a positive contribution to our World

Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to belong and learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness. We do not tolerate bullying.

I. Why we teach RE

(1) Legal requirements

- (a) The teaching of RE at St Mark's Elm Tree is in accordance with the *Diocese of Durham R.E. Syllabus 2013* incorporating Understanding Christianity.
- (b) As a Church Aided School, at least 80% of RE teaching time is to be devoted to Christianity. The *Diocese of Durham RE Syllabus 2013* suggests studying two world faiths in more depth, so at St Mark's C of E Primary the children study Islam and Judaism. Aspects of other faiths are brought into RE when deemed appropriate, but not studied as main topics.

The **recommended** allocation of time for RE is a minimum of 36 hours including 7 hours Non-Christian over the school year for KS1 and 45 hours including 9 hours Non-Christian for KS2. This excludes collective worship. [See *Diocese of Durham RE Syllabus 2013* for further clarification.]

- (c) Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE as in any school, but it is hoped that the majority choosing a Church Aided School would adhere to the RE curriculum also. The Head teacher and Governors are happy to discuss any concerns with parents.
- (d) Teachers in Church Aided Schools do not have the safeguard of the 1944 Act, Section 30, to withdraw from teaching RE.

(2) Voluntary Aided School status

Religious Education in Church Schools is governed by both the 1944 and 1988 Education Acts as well as by the Articles of Association [1 EXCELLENCE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST]

The denominational character of RE, i.e. the content and approaches to Religious Education, have been determined by the Governors in accordance with the Articles of Association of 1 EXCELLENCE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

Therefore Religious Education is in accordance with the beliefs and traditions of the Church of England.

Those sections of the 1988 Education Act which refer to the need for RE to 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain' or for Religious Education to be 'non-denominational' *do not apply* to Aided Schools.¹

(3) Ethos

We believe there are two central strands in teaching RE within a Church School:

1. On the one hand, RE is an educational activity with the task of helping children to think about Christian faith and other faiths, to analyse and reflect on it and to bring their critical faculties to bear on it. RE should also make a contribution to pupils' understanding of the world and to their spiritual and moral growth
2. On the other hand, we enjoy and celebrate the 'difference' of Church Schools and believe they should demonstrate their faith and values and the centrality of their Christian foundation in the whole life of the school. We believe that the experiences the children have in RE at St Mark's C of E Primary encourages a deeper understanding of faith and promotes Christian values as a central element of this 'expression of faith'.

(4) Broad aims

The School's RE teaching follows the broad aims suggested by the *Durham Diocesan RE Syllabus 2013 for Church Aided Schools* as follows (and aspects of Understanding Christianity)

Religious Education in Church Schools should help pupils to:

- reflect theologically and explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today
- understand the challenge faced by Christians in today's pluralist and post-modern society
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text
- recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world
- begin to develop their own commitments, beliefs and values
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world
- understand how religious faith can sustain believers in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world that children should be encouraged to foster a respect for the followers of the other world faiths. It is essential that this respect is based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of those faiths.

Therefore RE in Church Schools should also help pupils to:

- learn *about* other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and *from* them through encounter and dialogue
- recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God
- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths
- enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions

Religious Education in Church Schools should enable:

- pupils and teachers to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule
- pupils to make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity
- pupils from Christian families to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith
- pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith
- pupils with no religious background to be given an insight into what it means to be a person of faith
- pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the ultimate questions and challenges of life in today's society

Helping pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of religion and faith

We seek to develop and extend religious thinking and attitudes from the youngest child in our School to the oldest in Year 6 by:

- Taking religion seriously
- Seeing its importance for life
- Finding the questions it raises about life important and exciting
- Developing spirituality through creative learning and the experience of awe and wonder
- Encouraging the children to develop in themselves the values and standards of behaviour affirmed by Christianity and other faiths.

Special difficulties/considerations

- (a) Although St Mark’s C of E Primary is an Anglican Church School, only a few pupils attend the school for this reason.
- (b) There are also only a few representatives of any of the world faiths amongst the children and staff.

II. The teaching of RE

The teaching of RE at St Mark’s C of E is carried out in accordance with the *Diocese of Durham RE Syllabus 2013 and Understanding Christianity*.

The Syllabus is divided into 6 sections which alongside units from Understanding Christianity are reflected in the Units chosen for planning in the Long Term Plans:

Syllabus Content From *Diocese of Durham RE Syllabus 2013*

On a Quest to discover more about.....		
1.The Life of Jesus	The Messiah Incarnation The Son of God Sacrifice Authority Teaching	The light of the world The Servant King Resurrection The Trinity Miracles Salvation Redeemer
	The Gospel	Translation

2.The Bible	<p>Truth</p> <p>Word of God</p> <p>Wisdom</p> <p>Creation</p> <p>A library</p>	<p>Stories</p> <p>Testament</p> <p>The People of God</p> <p>Inspiration</p>
3.The Church	<p>Worship</p> <p>Sacraments</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Ministry</p> <p>The Eucharist</p> <p>Music</p>	<p>Kingdom</p> <p>Symbols</p> <p>Furniture</p> <p>Artefacts</p> <p>The worldwide church</p> <p>Different denominations</p>
4.Festivals and Celebrations	<p>The Resurrection</p> <p>The Trinity</p> <p>Rites of Passage</p> <p>Thankfulness</p>	<p>Incarnation</p> <p>Preparation</p> <p>Manifestation</p> <p>Celebration</p>
5.Christian way of life	<p>Faith</p> <p>Prayer</p> <p>Mission</p> <p>Service</p> <p>Discipleship</p> <p>Pilgrimage</p>	<p>Rules for living</p> <p>Art</p> <p>Hope</p> <p>Saints</p> <p>Persecution</p>
6.Non Christian faiths	<p>Buddhism</p> <p>Hinduism</p> <p>Islam</p> <p>Judaism</p> <p>Sikhism</p> <p>Places of worship</p>	<p>Sacred texts</p> <p>Rites of Passage</p> <p>Festivals</p> <p>Pilgrimage</p> <p>Prayer</p>

Foundation Years (Nursery and Reception) coverage of RE is within *Knowledge and Understanding of the World and Personal, Social and Emotional Development* and the children begin to develop an awareness and appreciation of the feelings and beliefs of themselves and others. Foundation 2 (Reception) follow a programme of study in line with Diocesan recommendations, Understanding Christianity and the *Early Years Foundation Stage* document.

III. Management/Coordination of the subject

The Subject Leader for RE will be responsible for the coordination of the subject throughout the school and supported by the Head Teacher, who also carries out the closely related *Policy for Worship*. The RE SL reports regularly to, and contributes to, the Ethos Committee who are members of the Governing Body working on continually developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school, developing links with the Church community and reviewing the Christian values and ethos of the school.

The Subject Leader implements RE with regard to the Syllabus [see above], Understanding Christianity and the Early Learning Goals for Foundation Years.

This involves:

- Collecting and circulating information
- Promoting internal and external INSET initiatives
- Monitoring the use of resources to order requisitions where necessary
- In consultation with the Head Teacher, the Ethos Committee and colleagues, formulate policy and practice for RE across the Primary School
- Supporting the Head Teacher in monitoring the implementation of the policy and scheme of work and evaluating its development
- Supporting the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the School Improvement Plan through membership of school development teams
- Evaluating the level and progression of teaching and learning through data analysis, lesson observations and book scrutiny.

4. Planning, Monitoring, Reviewing Procedures to gauge Effectiveness of Teaching

Planning is based on the *Diocese of Durham RE Syllabus 2013 and Understanding Christianity*. Units have been identified for each pair of year groups ie Y1/2 , Y3/4 and Y5/6 each share planning in the Long/Medium Term Planning. The individual teachers then use differentiation to allow for appropriate challenge and stimulation when using the scheme for guidance in lesson planning. We try to use first hand experiences, practical activities, visitors/visits and discussion as means of learning particularly from World religions. Although

a teacher needs to be aware of a child's learning and understanding we don't believe children need to record every aspect of a lesson in a written form.

The scheme of work with their accompanying teaching methods and resources are evaluated annually as part of a regular cycle to determine if what we teach and how we teach it reaches our objectives in relation to the needs of the children and the diocesan syllabus. This is done by the RE SL leading discussions with teams, whole school staff meetings and Governors (Ethos Committee). Recently it was decided to incorporate PSHE elements into the RE scheme as the objectives were common to both.

The Subject Leader, Head Teacher and Ethos Committee monitor the formative and summative assessments made throughout the school, having access to in-school assessments and samples of children's work. The SL evaluates the levels achieved by the children by analysing both the year on year Cohorts and comparing same year groups year on year to ensure progression and aid further development. The Subject Leader also has the opportunity to examine the effectiveness of teaching in the subject through lesson observations and book scrutiny. It is expected that standards of writing, imagination and presentation equal those in other subjects such as Literacy.

V. General Teaching Methods

Foundation Years (Nursery and Reception) cover RE as *Knowledge and Understanding of the World and Personal, Social and Emotional Development*. The weekly or termly coverage is at the discretion of the teacher but generally forms a discrete weekly session in Reception (F2) with aspects being covered throughout the week in a variety of general activities in both Reception and Nursery

Children in KS1 and KS2 are taught with careful attention to differentiation to enable all children to access the curriculum at an appropriate level and progress at a relevant pace. Members of staff endeavour to bring 'Excellence and enjoyment' to all lessons as promoted in the 2003/4 DFES *Primary Strategy*. The Scheme of Work was revitalised in 2009 in order to increase creativity and enjoyment with greater use of drama, role-play and cross-curricular elements which we record in our scrapbooks and in the school or staff shared area of the computer system if it is photographic or video evidence. Then further adjusted in line with the *Diocese of Durham RE Syllabus 2013 and/or Understanding Christianity*.

Whole-school RE events are an important part of the RE and pastoral curriculum. A shared vicar between our school and Holy Trinity CE School, encourages the use of Holy Trinity Church and parents are able to attend events at this venue or to attend our weekly Eucharist which takes place in our school. Multi-faith RE activities are held throughout the year, e.g.

Diwali and Chinese New Year. We have introduced the idea of Messy Church and Prayer Spaces Days to encourage the children to reflect on their spirituality.

Pupils record their work to

- Help clarify their own thinking
- Act as a note for future reference
- Communicate with others, e.g. in the use of electronic journals
- Provide evidence of their work

Discussion and debate strengthen the RE syllabus at all times. ICT facilities (specific Christian software, research, word processing, recording and photography) also contribute to and updates many lessons.

In order to encourage the children and show that their work is valued, displays are made in various areas of the school, computer system and scrapbooks are kept. These also reflect the centrality of Christianity within St Mark's C of E Primary.

VI. Assessment and Monitoring Systems for Recording Children's Progress

RE is not subject to nationally prescribed attainment targets, programmes of study and assessment arrangements, but assessment is regarded as a vital component to the good teaching of RE at St Mark's C of E Primary. Learning objectives related to RE levels are included in all planning and recorded written work.

All teaching seeks to uphold the School Assessment Policy.

Specific assessment measures in place:

- Class teachers will use their judgement to assess whether lesson objectives and outcomes have been met [see Assessment approaches below]. Levelling is used within AT1 and 2 and this is reflected in the termly assessments – see below
- Termly assessments are built into the medium term planning for KS1 and KS2, as a reflection of work undertaken during every term. Yearly assessment is recorded and compared with previous data.
- The coordinator will sample and analyse assessments throughout the academic year
- The staff will develop RE Scrapbooks as evidence of work in and out of class.
- Parents will be kept informed of their children's progress through Parent Consultations and termly Report cards

Assessment does not involve assessing the level of spirituality of pupils or the degree to which children will reveal their own beliefs, nor is it making judgements of pupils' values and sense of right and wrong. Teachers encourage tolerance and acceptance of all points of view and this is reflected throughout the school in language used and also in marking comments.

Assessment approaches:

- Grasp and use of religious language
- Learning about and from RE topics [reflecting Attainment targets 1 and 2]
- 8 Levels of Attainment recommended by the Diocese of Durham
- School marking scheme
- Role-play
- Self- and peer-assessment
- Insights in faith and belief
- Ability to puzzle and be curious about life
- Awareness of awe and wonder and mystery
- Ability to reflect on their own life and experience
- Ability to stand in the place of others (see another's point of view)
- Appreciation of different forms of truth

VII. Cross Curricular Issues

'Faith through life experiences' are comprehensively covered within the RE syllabus, but also arise specifically in PSHE, Circle Time and daily Worship sessions. In RE assessment we include experiences and achievements from the whole child and from all aspects of the curriculum and school life.

The use of computers provides opportunities to research or word process specific areas of the syllabus

Throughout the whole curriculum, in daily worship, class worship and in their social interaction during the school day, the children experience opportunities to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues encountered in RE.

VIII. Inclusion in RE

We recognise the right and entitlement of all our pupils to be provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of RE. This applies equally to the more and less able of our pupils. St Mark's C of E Primary inclusive approach to the teaching of RE rests on our belief that teachers should

- Set suitable learning challenges for our pupils
- Respond to the diverse learning needs of pupils

Children identified as having special educational needs are listed on the School's SEN register. RE lessons take account of the individual targets outlined on SEN children's Individual Support Plans.

In the case of particularly able and talented pupils, more advanced supplementary approaches are included to provide the necessary challenge and motivation

Particular reference should be made to the School SEN Policy.

RE specifically addresses the needs of:

- People who experience difficulties in other areas of the curriculum, for example in literacy or numeracy, but who demonstrate a capacity to respond to the religious or spiritual dimension
- Pupils who live in an environment which is entirely secular or strongly religious, where values and beliefs may be at odds with the wider culture in which they live
- Pupils who themselves have a personal faith commitment

With this in mind, teaching includes:

- The importance of relating activities to the pupils' own experience
- Emphasis on learning through the visual, aural and tactile and expressions of that learning through non-verbal and creative media
- The use of practical activities and learning through first-hand experiences, e.g. regular visits to places of worship and opportunities to meet with members of faith communities
- Opportunities for response and reflection and the use of self-evaluation and assessment
- Extension activities to enable those with a developed capacity for sensitivity and empathy to explore these
- Use of a wide range of resources to draw on the capacities of individual pupils who can access intellectually or emotionally demanding ideas

IX. Equal Opportunities

St Mark's C of E aims to secure for all children a broad, balanced, inclusive and progressive education. The School believes this is the right of all children, irrespective of social background, culture, race, ability or disability or gender. Activities are planned to be of equal interest to boys and girls and School is promoted as a welcoming place where *all* children are encouraged to explore and discover the wonders of learning.

RE makes a valuable contribution to the education of all pupils. As an essential part of the curriculum, it should provide a relevant and worthwhile learning experience for all pupils.

Learning in RE should enable pupils to:

- Respect self and be sensitive to the needs of others
- Challenge inequalities and discrimination associated with race, religion, culture, gender, ability or socio-economic groups
- Understand and contribute to our belief that : *Our school is a place where every person has the right to be themselves and to belong and learn in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and treats each other with respect and kindness. Our school does not tolerate bullying (our LGTB statement)*

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School Equal Opportunity and LGTB Policy.

X. Multi-Cultural Issues/Community Cohesion and British Values

The school endeavours to establish, through the RE Framework, principles in accordance with the School Education for a Multi-cultural Society Policy. Strong multi-faith and multi-cultural links are made whenever possible. We believe RE helps to promote Community Cohesion and British Values as the children have a time and place where they can develop their understanding of, and appreciation of, diversity but also promote shared values and thus challenge any discrimination. Effective RE looks at the school community, the local community, the UK community and the global community and thus explores and celebrates the diversity, culture, beliefs and values of each.

XI. How the impact of policy implementation will be evaluated

The Subject Leader for RE will, in association with the Head Teacher and Governors, make use of action plans and evaluations, the monitoring of teaching and learning and the analysis of assessment data as part of the processes of school self-evaluation and School Improvement Planning to judge the effectiveness of the Policy in raising standards and achieving quality provision. They will endeavour to ensure that the Policy reflects the practice of the School and review the policy documentation approximately every two years.

