



St Matthews C of E Primary School

Religious Education Policy

"Let your light shine"



**"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."**

London Diocesan Board of Schools

Vision

At St Matthew's, our vision is to "Let your light shine", nurturing a community where every child is encouraged to be brave, respectful, inspirational, grateful, honest and to shine together. As a rights-respecting school, we are dedicated to creating a safe and inclusive environment where each child can flourish. Guided by Christian values, we support our pupils in becoming loving, confident, resilient and successful global citizens, driven to make a difference, serving our school community and beyond. Our commitment to high aspirations, underpinned by mutual respect and support, ensures that every child is valued and empowered to reach their full potential - shining brightly in all they do.

Values

Bravery; Respect; Inspiration; Gratitude; Honesty; Togetherness

Introduction

St Matthew's C of E Primary School is an inclusive school situated within the London Borough of Enfield. This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education (RE) and is set within the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and our school's theologically rooted vision and associated Christian values.

We have high expectations of all our pupils and deliver a curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling all children to become religiously literate within an inclusive and safe space that promotes critical thinking and celebrates and respects difference. It enables all pupils to develop and encourages them to be thoughtful, compassionate, and active members of society in line with our vision.

What is RE?

RE is a core academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. RE provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Aims of RE:

Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- 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 religious and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews 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 time allocation

RE is taught weekly in every year group. In Early Years and Key Stage 1 it is approximately one hour per week and in Key Stage 2 approximately 1¼ hours per week. Additional time is given to the teaching and understanding of the Christian core concepts of Incarnation and Salvation through Focus weeks at Christmas and Easter.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', including pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education lessons. However, we would hope that as parents have specifically chosen our school, that they will wish their child to participate fully in Religious Education and Collective Worship.

Parents who wish to withdraw their child/children from RE are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher initially and then follow up any request in writing. The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by their parent(s) from RE, unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere. If this is the case, the governing body must be satisfied that this will not interfere with the child's attendance at school. If a pupil is withdrawn from RE, parents will have the opportunity to revisit and reconsider this decision. The school will keep a record of all those withdrawn and for how many sessions.

How we teach RE

At St Matthew's C of E Primary School, RE is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum and the school theologically rooted vision.

We follow the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) Religious Education Curriculum which encourages children to become confident in the following disciplinary knowledge and skills: Theology (Believing), Philosophy (Thinking), and Human Social Science (Living).

Intent of the LDBS syllabus

- ❖ To enable all children to become religiously literate;

- ❖ To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – *Vision for Education* (Church of England);
- ❖ To offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
 - o Ability to be critical thinkers;
 - o Ability to engage critically with texts;
 - o Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions;
 - o Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews;
 - o Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions;
 - o Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.

To offer units of learning that:

- ❖ Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content;
- ❖ Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences;
- ❖ Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- ❖ Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children;
- ❖ Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own.

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- ❖ The Christian vision of our school;
- ❖ Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children;
- ❖ Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement;
- ❖ The Church of England’s vision for Education – every person deserves to live a ‘life in all its fullness.’

Implementation of the LDBS syllabus

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

Enquire: Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, Philosophy or Human/ Social Science.

- ❖ **Investigate/Explore:** What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This ‘explore’ stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. For this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to ‘deepen’ learning:
 - Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
 - Using challenging and controversial questions
 - Extended pieces of writing
 - Discussion which continually asks ‘Have we gone deep enough yet?’
 - Children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc.)
 - Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues

Evaluate/Communicate: What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/ practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

Reflect on/Express: What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, RE is planned for and taught under 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' with a balance of child-initiated experiences and teacher led activities. To ensure consistency (like the rest of the school) the LDBS syllabus is used to deliver the curriculum. It is supported by learning the foundations of Christianity through their experiences of parables /bible stories and through celebrations and festivals of both Christian and other world faiths.

Teaching and learning strategies in the Early Years Foundation Stage include small and large groups, individuals, and circle times to teach moral and theological concepts. The children are given the opportunity to experience and respond to the world around them. Many cultural and religious stories are used to stimulate the children's' questioning and thinking. Opportunities are also provided to visit religious places and handle artefacts so that a first-hand experience is offered to the children at an early age of their development. Learning is evidenced in a whole class floor book and through recorded discussions/responses.

Religious Education in Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that:

- ❖ Children understand the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level;
- ❖ Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview;
- ❖ Children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life;
- ❖ They will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own;
- ❖ Some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will:

- ❖ Be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level;
- ❖ Be able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary;

- ❖ Have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life.

We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two:

- ❖ To be able to express and justify their own views with confidence;
- ❖ To be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts;
- ❖ To be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

Access to the curriculum

We recognise, through our adaptive planning, that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts, knowledge, and to flourish. All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

Impact of the LDBS syllabus

- ❖ Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews (Religious literacy);
- ❖ Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points because of a rich and engaging RE curriculum;
- ❖ Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions;
- ❖ Children will be able to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices;
- ❖ Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness.

Environment and Resources

Resources are kept in a central store area in boxes relating to faiths. This includes collections of artefacts, posters, and resources to support retelling and promote discussion and questioning. Children enjoy handling artefacts and are supported to do so respectfully. We value the importance of enrichment opportunities that provide experiences with a living faith instead of real-life resources including, where possible class trips and visitors.

We plan and organise the environment, with a range of tasks and activities that are adapted accordingly, to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of development and learning need. We promote both independent and collaborative working and place a great emphasis on the role of oracy within the classroom to support understanding of vocabulary and the organising of thinking. Since St Matthew's Church reopened in 2024, we are renewing our relationship we have with our parish and seek to work collaboratively with the church and wider community.

Planning, Assessment, Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning

- ❖ The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is two thirds Christian and one third other major world faiths.
- ❖ Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the children

Assessment

- ❖ Teachers familiarise themselves with the substantive knowledge children should know by the end of each unit.
- ❖ Teachers familiarise themselves with the yearly development that children should make in the following disciplinary knowledge and skills: Theology (Believing) Philosophy (Thinking) Human Social Science (Living)
- ❖ Teachers introduce the units Big Questions and explain that each lesson's specific question provides an opportunity to build knowledge and develop skills to be able to answer it.
- ❖ A pupil's knowledge and skills are monitored for each lesson during re-cap and specific lessons tasks. Pupil voice and a child's learning journey can be captured via scribing, photographs, group or individual work.
- ❖ Specific assessment tasks do not have to be carried out, unless incorporated into the plans or deemed appropriate by the Class Teacher.
- ❖ Working walls should be interactive and at the end of each lesson/unit provide a plethora of additional evidence
- ❖ Time should be given for children to peer assess their use of specific vocabulary during a task and/or at the end of a unit.
- ❖ Next step questioning to 'go deeper' whether that be enabling a child to meet working towards, progress to expected or move onto Greater Depth.
- ❖ Teachers assess each child's progress at the end of each unit using the judgements of working towards (WTS) Expected (EXP) or Greater Depth (GDS) to inform future planning

Recording

- ❖ Each child's religious journey should be documented and captured across all year groups in a variety of ways.
- ❖ Pupil voice - written individually or scribed, this can be placed in floor book (EYFS-Y6) and/or individual workbooks (Y1-6)
- ❖ Working walls should be interactive and display the voice of the children alongside specific instruction
- ❖ Group or individual work can be both written or creative (photos, art, drama, music)
- ❖ Scaffold and support the work of those who need help writing through mixed ability pairing or teacher support.
- ❖ Children should respond to the next step questions to clarify or 'go deeper'.
- ❖ Discussion based lessons can be evidence in floor books and group or individual tasks in workbooks

Monitoring and evaluating

- ❖ Book looks
- ❖ Cross School moderation - to benchmark standards beyond the school
- ❖ Internal data - which is tracked, analysed, discussed with staff
- ❖ Pupil progress meeting discussions
- ❖ Pupil voice

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Every effort must be made by teachers to ensure that pupils with SEND are enabled to participate as fully and as effectively as possible in religious education. Teachers should take specific action to enable the effective participation of pupils with SEND through effective planning. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at this stage.

Religious Education offers pupils with SEND opportunities to:

- ❖ develop their self-confidence and awareness
- ❖ understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups
- ❖ bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom
- ❖ develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their belief and experience
- ❖ reflect on and consider their own values and those of others

Parents and Carers

At St. Matthew's we recognise that a partnership between the school and parents/carers is essential to help children flourish. Children are encouraged to share their learning at home. Our newsletters share pupil achievements as well as giving an insight into school life.

Parents are invited to collective worship and Church services so that children can share their learning and achievements. Parents/carers are kept informed and are encouraged to discuss their children's learning during parents' evenings and an annual report is sent out detailing their progress.

Continuing Professional Development:

At St Matthew's our staff receive high-quality CPD in RE through appropriately planned staff meetings, LDBS training sessions and collaborative learning with other Enfield Church of England schools.

Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will:

- ❖ Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education.
- ❖ Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- ❖ To keep up to date with developments in Religious Education through reading, attending LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools.
- ❖ To monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching, and assessment of Religious Education across the school in collaboration with the leadership team.
- ❖ To support staff in the teaching of Religious Education across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation.
- ❖ To lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards.
- ❖ To plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective Religious Education teaching.
- ❖ To work closely with the senior leadership team to identify the CPD needs of individuals, teams, and the whole school.
- ❖ To regularly review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document.
- ❖ Oversee the RE budget and 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.

Evaluation/Review:

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every ***two years*** by the Governing Body.

Ratified by the Governing Body: March 2026

Review Date: March 2028