



## RE Policy 2023

### St Mark's C of E Junior School

#### Our Vision

**'Believing in Better'**

**Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'**

#### Our Ethos

At St Mark's we see ourselves as a family that nurtures and includes all who come through our doors built upon our Christian values of Hope, Wisdom, Community, Dignity and Love.

Through strong leadership, a positive attitude to learning and high expectations of all our learners, the school provides a friendly and caring place in which to learn where everybody matters.

St Mark's is a proud church school that likes to celebrate success at every level and to build both confidence and responsibility in us all. We believe the excellent relationships we develop with our children and their families are central to creating a distinctive Christian ethos.

We work together in partnership with families, and other key members of the community, on the school's journey to provide an outstanding education for all and for everyone to flourish.

#### Policy Statement

At St. Mark's, our Christian ethos is at the centre of all that we do. Religious education and the outworking of our values as a worshipping community underpin our daily work. Through the teachings of Jesus, we strive to promote the values of hope, wisdom, community, dignity and love.

Date	Review Date	Subject Leader	Nominated Governor
May 2023	May 2024	Emily Haslam	Richard Gay

## Introduction

Religious Education and World Views is taught in our school because: “RE in primary schools enables pupils to take their place within a diverse multi-religious and multi-secular society. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It affords pupils both the opportunity to see the religion and non-religion in the world, and the opportunity to make sense of their own place in that world.” (Research Review series: Religious Education, Ofsted 2021)

At St. Mark’s RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. Lessons provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all faiths and worldviews

Teaching in RE aims to challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. 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.

According to the 2019 **Statement of Entitlement to RE in C of E schools**, the aims 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 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 living, believing and thinking.

## **Our Aims at St. Mark's**

With Religious Education at the core, we aim for the children:

- To learn about many faiths, religions and non – religious world views and be able to make comparisons between them
- To encourage philosophical thinking, asking 'The Big Questions', where everyone's world views are valued in order to build a deeper understanding of key religions and beliefs
- To develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, empathy and reflection.
- To build tolerance and mutual respect for other cultures and ways of life
- To discern connections between children's own lives and ways of understanding the world
- To develop a sense of self, social awareness and consideration of others as part of a wider family/community
- To enable pupils to relate the knowledge gained through Religious Education to their understanding of other subjects in the curriculum

## **Teaching and learning about Christianity**

In line with the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus, between two thirds and a half of the RE Curriculum focuses on Christianity. At St. Mark's, Understanding Christianity is the main resource that we use to structure our RE planning to ensure the children follow a clear progression of knowledge and skills. This enables the children to develop their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. Understanding Christianity draws upon the rich and diverse experience of Christianity as a global religion, encompassing diverse lived experiences. The process of delivering the Key Concepts in Understanding Christianity are through three main stages:

- 1) Making sense of the text: Developing skills of reading and interpretation; understanding how Christians interpret biblical texts and draw meaning
- 2) Understanding the impact: examining ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings
- 3) Making connections: evaluating, reflecting on and connecting texts and concepts studied, and discerning possible connections these and their own lives.

## **Teaching and learning about world religions and world views**

Across St. Mark's children will learn about the religious tradition of Hindus, Sikhs, Jewish people and Muslims. It is vital that all children have the opportunity to gain an accurate understanding of world religions and world views. This will develop their appreciation and respect of the faith and world views of others whilst deepening their own views. Alongside teaching about religious beliefs, non – religious world views are presented, discussed and compared.

## Organisation and Planning

- The RE syllabus is in line with the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus-endorsed by Salisbury Diocese and covers 45 hours per year
- Christianity is taught from 'Understanding Christianity' resources which are based upon the Big Picture of the bible. Children are taught the 8 Key theological concepts over a two-year cycle, with some topics continued into the next year, "digging deeper" into the key enquiry question.
- Children will learn about the religious traditions of Hindus, Sikhs, Jewish people and Muslims using the Discovery RE Scheme-supplemented/linked to other curriculum areas and topics where opportunities arise and enriched by visitors, assemblies and trips.
- RE is taught throughout the school by a RE specialist teacher (Mrs Haslam).
- RE specialist keeps all staff up to date with a Termly Review of learning and progression
- Throughout the year we celebrate the major Christian festivals with the whole community (Y3 lead Christmas nativity performance, Y4 Harvest Service, Y5 Easter, Year 6 Leavers Service)
- A variety of teaching approaches including teacher presentations, role play, drama art and story-telling as well as quizzes, questions and answer sessions, discussions and debates are employed in order that RE learning is active and enjoyable as well as rigorous and challenging
- RE is about subject knowledge, critical / evaluative thinking as well as personal spiritual development.
- RE will be taught to all pupils unless any parent exercises their right for their child to be withdrawn.
- Regular monitoring and CPD undertaken by Subject Leader and feedback to staff.

## Approach

RE is taught weekly by a RE specialist teacher through an enquiry-based approach. Each term children are presented with a Key Enquiry Question to investigate in depth. RE is carefully and creatively planned to ensure engagement, progression and challenge for all pupils. We focus on quality enquiry, challenge and high-level thinking skills, where fewer things are taught in depth; to ensure knowledge is secure and 'sticky' before moving on. Progression of knowledge and skills is carefully planned throughout each year group and across the school.

A broad range of skills are taught at St. Mark's; in each lesson one skill will be focused on explicitly e.g. Investigation, interpretation, evaluation, analysis, empathy, expression, reflection, application or discernment.

A diverse range of approaches to learning in RE ensure all children can access the curriculum and express their understanding and reflect deeply. Approaches such as art, drama, music, stories, interviews, discussion, questioning and visitors enrich the children's learning.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- 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 and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- A time for reflection

### **Withdrawal from RE lessons**

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum and our school will comply with any such request. 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 ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child arranges to discuss this with the headteacher and to take up the opportunity to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum in school before making this decision.

In the event that parents still wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons, our school/academy will undertake responsibility for their supervision with regard to health and safety. Information on these arrangements are clear on our website.

### **Special Needs**

RE at St. Mark's is an inclusive Curriculum. All lessons are planned to ensure children can access the learning and engage from their own unique starting point. Adaptive teaching will respond to children's diverse learning needs; suitable and appropriate tasks will be provided to ensure all children progress and are challenged. Learning encourages regular paired and group discussion, questioning and exploration. Children can flourish together as a team of learners.

## **Recording and Assessment**

Assessment takes place in a wide variety of ways in RE lessons. It is part of the learning process at every stage, it is therefore planned into every lesson. Sequences of lessons are regularly adapted based upon previous lessons learning, knowledge and discoveries which are brought into the next lesson. Assessing children's understanding of central concepts, skills and knowledge are built into each lesson rather than just at the end of a unit. Through regular recall tasks, reflective thinking starters and key questioning children are able to clear up misconceptions and build upon prior learning. Knowledge organisers are used throughout to enable children to assess their own learning and take responsibility for their development. Children are assessed against the learning focus of the lesson and within each learning focus is a key skill. At the end of each unit children are given a 'show what you know' task, through which they can independently reflect on their own learning. At St. Mark's children are involved in the assessment process in RE, at the end of a unit children have the opportunity to answer the Key enquiry question. Following this, children are given time to reflect upon their progress throughout the term by completing a 'My learning progress' form. Evidence of children's work can be found in individual RE books and class floor books.

## **Role of the Subject Leader**

The RE leader is responsible for:

- The monitoring and reviewing of this policy with the staff and governors.
- Assembling and organising relevant resources.
- Attending relevant training and providing feedback to staff and governors as appropriate.
- Providing CPD from training to meet the needs of the school and staff
- Keep teachers up to date with the planning and delivery of RE in line with the provision outlined in the curriculum overview.
- Completing book scrutinise, pupil conferencing and assessment across the school
- Monitoring progression of knowledge and skills across each year group
- Analysing and reporting on standards of RE across the school, identifying strengths to celebrate and areas for improvement.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- 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.
- Liaise with the school's Diocesan adviser and/or the Diocesan adviser with responsibility for Religious Education

## **Legal Status**

The Governors of St Mark's C of E Junior School are responsible for the Religious Education policy of the school. The policy has been drawn up by the RE Lead, with the approval of the staff and Head Teacher. The Religious Education policy for the school follows the guidelines set out in the agreed syllabus for Wiltshire and those of the Diocesan Board of Education.

## **Monitoring and Reviewing**

In our school, governors have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of RE and how the RE in the school reflects our Christian vision. The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum.

The RE subject leader will assist the headteacher and governors by:

- monitoring long term and medium-term plans to ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement to religious education and that RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- monitoring RE through work scrutiny, observations and assessment