



# St Mary Abbots Church of England Primary School



## RE Policy 2023-24

**At St Mary Abbots School we grow little seeds into mighty trees. Our children's development is rooted in our Christian ethos and values. We ensure that our children experience learning of the highest standard and are nurtured to flourish in all things across the curriculum; as well as physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.**

# Religious Education Policy for Voluntary Aided Primary Schools

“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)*

## 1. Introduction

This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils in developing a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and the school’s theologically rooted vision and associated Christian values.

### **School context and expectations**

*We have high expectations of all our pupils and deliver a curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling children to become religiously literate within an inclusive and safe space that promotes critical thinking and celebrates and respects difference.*

## 2. What is RE?

RE is a core academic subject at St Mary Abbots, that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. 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.

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 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 of living, believing, and thinking.

## 3. Curriculum balance and time

At St Mary Abbots, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. There should be sufficient dedicated curriculum time with lessons taught weekly and meeting explicitly RE objectives. At St Mary Abbots, staff are committed to the delivery of RE ensuring that weekly lessons last 1 hour and 30 minutes. The school has decided to not teach the two week units and will use these units of learning to be the focus of a whole school RE day.

*Please see appendix 1: RE Curriculum Overview*

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE. In addition to RE curriculum time, children at St Mary Abbots attend collective worship and church to spend time as a community, reflecting on Biblical teaching, praying and singing.

#### 4. Legal requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over).

*(DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28)*

The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in Key Stage One is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes.

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 distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision. Please see attached link ([Legal Requirement – Right to Withdraw](#))

#### 5. How we teach RE:

RE at St Mary Abbots School 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.

#### 6. The 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:
  - i. Ability to be critical thinkers
  - ii. Ability to engage critically with texts
  - iii. Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions
  - iv. Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews
  - v. Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/ or philosophical convictions
  - vi. 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 the 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.’

## 7. 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. In order 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.

## 8. Early Years Foundation Stage

RE is taught to all children weekly from Reception. In Reception, the RE curriculum covers only Christianity units of learning, however, other world faiths are recognised and discussed throughout the year as events and celebrations occur in those faith groups. The implementation of the LDBS syllabus is the same in EYFS as in Key Stag One and Two. The children’s learning is documented in a whole class RE scrapbook, providing pupil voice from all children and examples of RE learning from activities they have done, linked to the intended learning objective.

### Religious Education in Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, 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 (Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism). By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level. That they will be able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary. That they will 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. We aim for them to be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts. We want our children 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.

### 9. Access to the curriculum

We recognise, through our adaptive planning system, 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, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts and 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.

### 10. 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 as a result 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

### 11. Environment and Resources

Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. 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. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which Religious Education can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking.

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. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum.

We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts. We value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors. We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with St Mary Abbots Church and work regularly and collaboratively with the clergy and wider community.

## 12. Planning, assessment, recording, monitoring and evaluation

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is two thirds Christian and one third other major world faiths. At St Mary Abbots, staff consider ongoing formative assessment opportunities consisting of:

- high quality teacher questioning
- teacher observations, particularly around children's verbal contributions to class and group discussions
- teacher observations of when children are engaging in collaborative learning opportunities
- Teaching Assistants scribing children's verbal responses during class discussions and debates
- quality verbal and written feedback
- ongoing self and peer assessment
- Beginning and end of unit self-assessments
- Prior knowledge and understanding mind maps at the beginning of a unit and then re-visited at the end of a unit thus offering a tool that evidences clearly the children's progress of learning during a unit
- Summative assessment

Teachers will gather evidence from a range of sources including:

- Children's individual books
- Children's individual reflections
- Photographs
- Records of class discussions/debates (flip charts)
- Group work outcomes
- Class displays
- Teacher's evaluations of their planning

These sources provide the teachers with opportunities to continually assess the children's understanding in RE. At St Mary Abbots, staff monitor the progress children are making within each half termly unit of learning. At the end of a unit of learning, teachers will decide if a child is working at the expected standard in RE, working towards the expected standard in RE or working at a greater depth within the expected standard in RE. Teachers will use their knowledge of the children, outcomes in their RE books and discussion and pupil voice, to make a best fit judgement according to the syllabus statements for that unit of learning. At the end of the academic year, a summative judgement will be made. This will be based on the whole year of RE learning and all units of learning covered and will indicate if a child is working at the expected standard in RE, working towards the expected standard in RE or working at a greater depth within the expected standard in RE.

## 13. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in the following way:

- Weekly RE planning meetings with the RE subject leader
- Regular RE book looks to ensure that high quality RE teaching is happening and that books are up-to-date and marked, with next steps given and children's responses
- Regular moderation of RE books with specialist from the LDBS
- Observations of RE teaching

#### 14. Continued professional development:

The RE subject leader ensures that staff receive regular high quality CPD by sharing key learning following termly subject leader meetings, organising subject knowledge specific CPD and weekly shared planning sessions to discuss key learning and content to be covered and understood by the children within their RE lessons.

#### 15. Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents and carers is essential to help children flourish. During parent consultation, parents will have the opportunity to look at RE books. RE may be discussed at parent consultations and/or included in teacher comments on reports.

#### 16. 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.
- Keep up to date with developments in the area of 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 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.

Date of validation..... Signed.....  
Chair of Governors

Date of review..... Signed.....  
Chair of Governors

## Appendix 1:



### Model RE Curriculum Map:

	Aut 1	Aut 2a	Aut 2b	Spring 1	Spring 2a	Spring 2b	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Christianity	Christianity	Christianity	World Faith	Christianity	Christianity	World Faith	Christianity
Reception	Who made the wonderful world and why?	Why is Christmas special for Christians?		Why do Christians believe Jesus is special?	What is so special about Easter?		Who cares for this special world?	How did Jesus rescue people?
1	What responsibility has God given people about taking care of creation? (6 sessions)	Why are saints important to Christians? (2 sessions)	Why is each person important in the Nativity story? (5 sessions)	Judaism What is it like to live as a Jewish person? (6 sessions)	What are God's rules for living – The 10 commandments (2 sessions)	Why is Easter the most important festival for Christians? (4 sessions)	Islam What does it mean to be a Muslim? (6 sessions)	Why did Jesus tell stories? (6 sessions)
2	Why did Jesus teach the Lord's prayer as the way to pray? (6 sessions)	Who is the Saint of our School? / What's the Story of our School name? (2 sessions)	How does the symbol of light help us to understand the meaning of Christmas for Christians? (4 sessions)	Judaism Why are they having a party? (6 sessions)	What is the story of Noah really all about? (2 sessions)	How do the symbols of Easter help us to understand the meaning of Easter for Christians? (4 sessions)	Islam How do the five pillars of Islam help a Muslim to show commitment to God -Allah? (6 sessions)	Why do Christians make and keep promises before God? (6 sessions)
3	What is the Bible's Big Story? (6 or 8 sessions)	Why is Remembrance important? (2 sessions)	How does the season of Advent and the feast of the Epiphany point towards the true meaning of Christmas? (5 sessions)	Judaism What does it mean to be Jewish? (6 sessions)	How do Christians believe following Jesus' new commandments and his 2 greatest commandments make a difference? (2 sessions)	Who is the most important person in the Easter story? (5 sessions)	Buddhism What did the Buddha teach his followers about life? (6 sessions)	Who is Jesus (I am .....statements) (6 sessions)
4	How did belief in God affect the actions of people from the Old Testament? (6 sessions)	What are the beatitudes and what do they mean to Christians? (2 sessions)	Is the Christmas message of peace still relevant to today's world? (6 sessions)	Hinduism How do Hindus worship? (6 sessions)	Do fame and the Christian faith go together? (2 sessions)	What is Holy Communion and how does it build a Christian community? (4 sessions)	Hinduism What does it mean to be a Hindu? (6 sessions)	Liturgy Why is liturgy important to many Christians? (6 sessions)
5	What do the miracles tell us about Jesus? (6 sessions)	What can we learn from wisdom? (2 sessions)	How do art and music convey Christmas? (5 sessions)	Sikhi How did the first five Sikh Gurus shape Sikhism? (6 sessions)	What happens in churches during Lent, Holy Week and Easter Sunday? (6 sessions)	Sikhi How did the final five human Sikh Gurus shape Sikhism? (6 sessions)	Understanding faith in.... (6 sessions) Or How do Muslims live and embrace their faith in a diverse world? (6 sessions)	
6	What might the journey of life and death look like from a Christian perspective? (6 sessions)	Should every Christian go on a pilgrimage? (2 sessions)	How would Christians advertise Christmas to show what Christmas means today? (5 sessions)	Buddhism What does it mean to be a Buddhist? (6 sessions)	How does the Christian festival of Easter offer hope? (6 sessions)	Christianity How has the Christian message survived for over 2000 years? (6 sessions)	Who decides? (Version a or b) (6 sessions)	

#### To note:

It is recommended that the Easter and Christmas units are taught over a six-week period to allow enough time to teach the units in depth. Some units only 4 or 5 sessions have been planned. However, allowing six weeks, gives teachers the flexibility to teach 1 session over two lessons.

#### Two-week units:

It is the school's decision as to whether they wish to include the two-week units in their curriculum design or not.

Many of the two-week topics would provide a good theme for a whole school RE learning day.