



ST MARY ABBOTS SCHOOL
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
POLICY

Reviewed January 2022

ST MARY ABBOTS SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Religious Education at St Mary Abbots, as a Voluntary Aided Church of England School, has a high profile and learning provides fully for the needs of all learners. Learners are inspired by the subject and develop a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world. Our children develop a full understanding of Christianity and a broad range of religions and world views.

Religious Education (RE)

1. The aims of Religious Education in Church Schools 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 that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
 - To enable pupils to know and understand other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
 - To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

2. Appropriate to age, at the end of their education in Church schools the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum pupils are able to:
 - Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
 - Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
 - Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
 - Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

Effective teaching and learning about Religions and World Views

3. Church schools have a duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views. They should provide:
 - A challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework.
 - An assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts.
 - A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide.
 - A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place.
 - The opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of religion and world views as lived by believers.
 - RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development.

Curriculum balance

4. Christianity is the majority study in RE in our school.
 - In KS1 & KS2 at least 2/3rds is Christianity.

Curriculum Time

5. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time is organised and committed to the delivery of RE.
 - 1 hour for KS1 pupils and 1 hour 20 minutes for KS2.

Developing staff expertise

6. To demonstrate the subject's comparable status with other core curriculum areas in both staffing and resourcing, it is a priority in our school to build up staff expertise in RE.
 - RE is led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
 - All staff teaching RE have access to appropriate professional development.
 - All staff and governors have an understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.
 - The Governing Body monitors standards in RE effectively.

Expected academic outcomes for pupils

7. Pupil achievement in RE is equal to, if not better than other subjects.

The role of the Diocesan Board of Education

8. The function of the LDBS is to promote RE in schools in the diocese. This is fulfilled by:
 - Monitoring the quality of RE in church schools.
 - Offering high quality training so that the provision for RE is effective and promotes religious literacy.

Support for effective and outstanding RE

9. RE teachers belong to a wider educational and church community. They expect positive support in providing effective and outstanding RE from:
 - The SLT
 - The GB, especially Foundation Governors
 - The LDBS
 - Clergy Team
 - The Church of England Education Office (see Making a Difference p31 no.4)
 - The Church of England representatives on the local SACRE

St Mary Abbots Religious Education policy is set within the Mission statement, the Aims of the school and the Scheme of Work for RE.

THE CHARACTER OF ST MARY ABBOTS SCHOOL, AND OUR APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF OTHER FAITHS

St Mary Abbots is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School. The school attracts children from churches both from within and out of the borough. Christian faith and practice lie at the heart of its religious education. Teaching about other world religions is important so that each child develops sensitivity and respect for those with other beliefs and practices. This does not mean giving other beliefs equal status in the religious education of the school. It

means giving all the children some introduction to other beliefs and practices which pupils in the school may hold and pursue. This should lead to mutual respect, understanding and tolerance. It is important that children of minority groups are made to feel that their culture, and with it, their religious beliefs, are given significance even if the School's foundation cannot ultimately identify with their particular faith. The school is preparing children to become members of a multi-faith society and St Mary Abbots Religious Education policy reflects this.

A Whole-School Context of Faith

Prayer and praise are part of the fabric of St Mary Abbots School, which pupils will share in collective worship and class. This is strongly reinforced by the link with St Mary Abbots Church, both as the parish church and as a local expression of the universal church. The school is a Eucharistic community, with weekly participation in the Eucharist celebrated in church, involving children, staff and the local community.

This explicit Anglican nature of the School provides the foundation on which we also celebrate the faith and practice of those who belong to other Christian denominations, to other faiths, and those of no faith. In our school all are valued and respected.

(Please read the Admissions policy for further details of entry procedures).

Teaching of other religions will take place in the following ways:

1. Through the cycle of assemblies
2. Classroom discussion and debate
3. Through the scheme of work for Religious Education
4. Visiting speakers
5. Visiting places of worship

The School follows the updated LDBS scheme of work.

St Mary Abbots School identifies the following areas for study.

- The Bible
- Jesus the Son of God
- Belief, Faith and Values
- The Church
- Worship
- Christian festivals
- Faiths in the community

Objectives of Religious Education

Pupils should be helped to acquire a knowledge and understanding of the significance and place of Religion by being introduced to:

- the scriptures and other spiritual books and to stories that have implicit or explicit religious significance

- special places of worship e.g. churches, synagogues, temple, mosque, etc.
- important places of pilgrimage through slides, video clips, images or visiting speakers who have made pilgrimages to these sites
- stories about founders or key people (male/female)
- artefacts used in ritual and worship
- festivals, ceremonies, customs, foods and forms of worship

Pupils should also have opportunities to learn about religion from a range of sources, including:

- artefacts, photographs, slides, video clips
- music, dance, drama
- stories, plays and poems
- visits to places of worship
- people coming into school to talk about their faith
- written sources e.g. letters/texts
- computer based material and websites

Pupils should be encouraged to express and evaluate the significance of beliefs, values and religious issues by:

- developing a sense of identity both individual and collective
- developing and enhancing their own understanding of significant experiences and be given positive help in exploring the patterns, meanings and purposes of life
- being able to continue in, or come to, their own beliefs and respect the rights of others who hold beliefs different from their own
- entering imaginatively into beliefs, values, ideals and visions of life that are important to others
- appreciating the value of their own faith or belief system and explaining it to others in an atmosphere of openness and trust
- developing the skills of expression and evaluation of religious concepts, beliefs, practices, through reflection on religious issues
- developing the skills of negotiation and the ability to deal with conflict in a reasonable way

Pupils should be encouraged to express and communicate their ideas through the use of art, music, drama, craft, discussion, role play, narrative etc.

Assessment:

Children's attainment in RE will be assessed using the LDBS banding system, which sits alongside the LDBS scheme of work.

SKILLS, ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Pupils should be given opportunities to develop skills and attitudes that are appropriate to RE

and other areas of the curriculum

- to enhance their curiosity
- appreciating elements of mystery and uncertainty
- caring for each other and the environment
- developing self-esteem and worth and to esteem others
- being open, fair minded and receptive to others
- listening attentively and being willing to question
- showing sensitivity to the feelings, needs and aspirations of others
- developing and learning to take responsibility
- showing consideration and concern towards those who are less fortunate
- develop skills of enquiry, reason and reflectiveness
- to be familiar with Christian Values – for example, peace, forgiveness, friendship, hope, justice and thankfulness.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Religious Education

In Voluntary Aided (VA) schools the decision on the content of Religious Education rests with the Governing Body and should be in line with the Trust Deeds of the School. As in the case with collective worship, it is the duty of all church schools to demonstrate their distinctiveness through the content of the Religious Education offered. Schools may encounter individual families, or possibly larger groups within the community of the school, who request that their children are withdrawn from RE because they are members of another faith.

Any parent considering withdrawal must contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at the school.

Managing the right of withdrawal

The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus being taught in the School and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs. The School may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

It is our strong advice that the school leadership engage with every family, in the case of a request for withdrawal, to explain how the child's education and experience will suffer as a result, and to aim to avoid any withdrawal. However, the law makes clear - Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.

Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.

If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with

the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.

Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session (Non-statutory Guidance 2010).

This Policy is reviewed every two years or earlier if appropriate.

Next review January 2024